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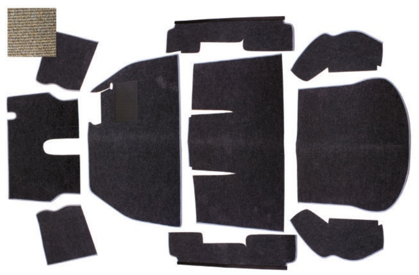

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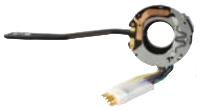

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Photo by reinisb.com
Car built using VW Heritage parts by Shane Lawlor at Lawlors Customs, N. Ireland

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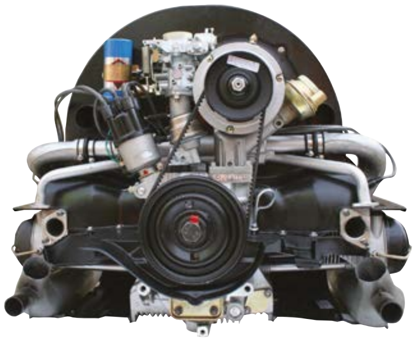

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over buying at the newsagents. Turn to page 45 for more infomation

WELCOME TO THE MAG

As I'm bashing these words out, the 2014 *VolksWorld* Show is just three days away. The office is stacked floor to ceiling with show paraphernalia and, if I'm honest, there's a part of me that's really looking forward to it being over.

Truth is, the show is a mammoth undertaking that swallows up more time than any outsider could possibly imagine. However, I do know I shouldn't feel like this. It's an awesome weekend, but I think I've simply forgotten what it's like to attend it as a civilian, as it were.

There's always a danger when your hobby becomes your job that a bit of you falls out of love with it. You remember how cool it was when the only thing you had to do at a show was meet up with your friends, have a laugh and a drink and hopefully find that part you needed for your project.

When your VW hobby is your VW job you find you have to work pretty much every weekend in the summer and can't just sit around quaffing rosé, but have to talk to people, find feature cars, gather content, help out on the magazine stand and generally represent the brand.

"Oh, boo hoo," I hear you say. "You're getting paid to 'work' with VWs. It's not like you're digging for coal!" True. But all this means is I sometimes forget the buzz a VW show brings. And to that end, I have been both truly shamed and utterly inspired recently, watching people beavering away to get their cars ready for our show. And I'm not talking show cars, but club cars for the outside displays, or simply just for the joy of driving it on the day. They're the people who make the scene what it is. Not the *prima donnas* who strut around because they've built the lowest or the fastest whatever. It takes all sorts to make the VW scene but, above all else, it takes enthusiasm. ■

James

James Peene
Group editor

Photos: www.tonylarge.net

Flat out for fun

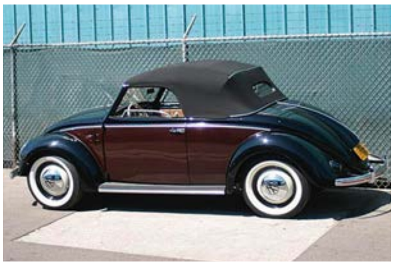
Bob Beales 'demonstrated' his VW Beetle at Race Retro, Europe's premier winter classic motorsport show, on the outside live rally stage. Having put on a great display last year, he didn't disappoint this year, and gave fans a chance to see his famous car, which has recently been immortalised by Scalextric, in full sideways effect. The car was originally campaigned by Bob Bengry in the 1960 and 1962 UK Rally Championships. Bob Beales acquired the car in 1965, and campaigned it until recently, winning numerous awards, including the Welsh Historic Rally Championship. Over the years, the car has had 1200, 1300, 1500, 1600 Beetle and 1500 Porsche engines, but currently runs an Okrasa 34RSGT.

< Now that's what we call suspension jacking! Bill performs the old triple salco with pike, while his co-driver quaffs a glass of Amontillado

RTTS is back for 2014!

Yes, despite last year's event officially being the last ever, Run To The Sun is back again, with claims that it will be better than ever. If you're new to the VW scene, the annual pilgrimage to Newquay for RTTS was an institution for years. If, on the other hand, you have followed RTTS from the 'old days' this news will kick you right back in time.

Run To The Sun, The New Dawn, returns on May 23-26, and tickets are available direct from Trevelgue Holiday Park on 01637 852000. Alternatively, check www.facebook.com/TheofficialRuntotheSunSite



Hebmüller anyone?

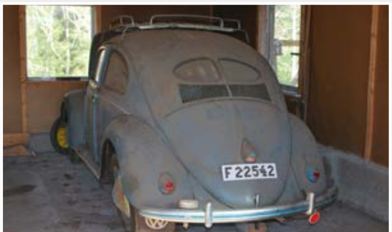
This is the stuff of dreams right here. If ever you have thought about your dream car garage, there's a fair chance a Hebmüller roadster is in there somewhere. It certainly is in the *VolksWorld* garage.

Well, if you happen to have $220,000 (£133,171.94 at today's prices) in or behind your couch, then number 136 could be yours. Restored by renowned restoration shop, West Coast Classics in California, about 10 years ago, this 1949 example in gorious burgundy and black has only had about 100 miles put on the clock since then and it has been in a private collection.

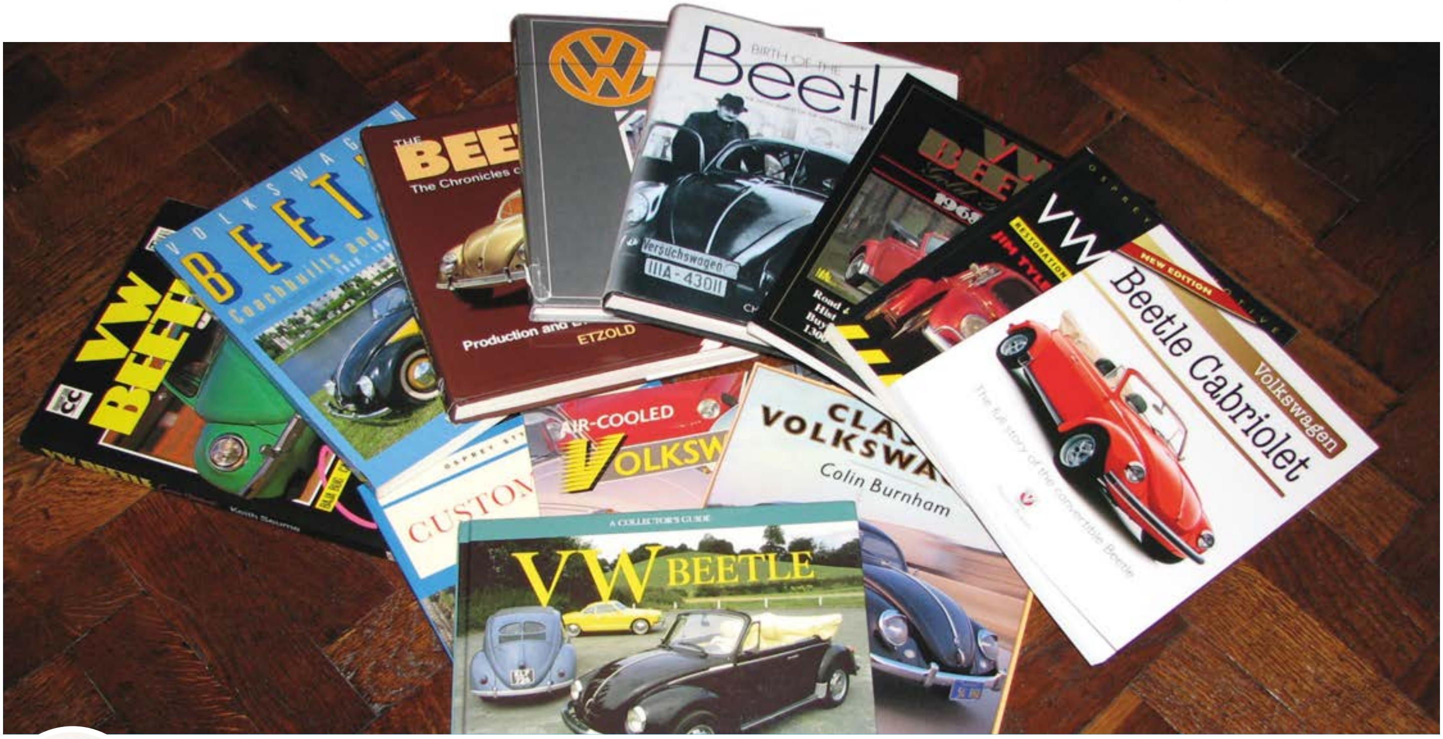
So what are you waiting for? Give Lenny a call and tell him you'll take it!

Discovered

Just when you think all the good ones have been found, another one emerges from a barn. The story goes this 1952 Split was pushed into the barn in 1970 after it suffered some engine trouble, and there it stayed. According to the new owner, "It is untouched and unwelded, but it needs some welding now, but not so much. The interior is pretty nice except for some rats had a party in there, and many of the glass parts are broken. I have been trying to buy this car for five years now and finally I was able to after an auction between me and another VW / Porsche enthusiast. The car was located 20km from me." Like we've always said, behind every locked door...



The stuff of legend. Johan is the lucky man who opened the right barn door in Sweden, and came away with the car, and the stash of desirable Split goodies below



For the love of literature

Do we really need for any more books on the VW Beetle?

I am often asked by people outside of our hobby how we find enough content to fill a magazine month after month, year after year, and my reply is always the same – it's as much about the people as the cars. Every car we write about, whether it's a readers' ride, an accompaniment to a letter or a full-blown cover car, has a different story and every owner different experiences. That's what continues to make it a fulfilling and enjoyable way to earn a crust. But when it comes to books on Volkswagens, the Beetle in particular, I now find myself asking the same question. As a VW journalist of some 20 years now, it'll come as no surprise to hear that I have amassed a pretty extensive collection of books on the subject. And there are some truly great ones that, even 20 or more years after their publication, still hold their heads high and provide invaluable reference tools for my job, and for enthusiasts alike. The key to their success was being well researched, written by people with both knowledge and passion for their subject and, most importantly, focus. A book on high-performance engines, for examples, can well afford to skip the 25 / 30-horse era, whereas a book on Old Speed VWs would do well to call it a day well before the dawn of the three-piece manifold.

Where once my OCD wouldn't allow me to walk past a new book on VWs without adding it to my library, these days I'm forced to be a bit more discerning. I can't recall when it happened, but there came a point some years ago when I realised I was learning nothing new from the generic books on VWs that were being published. That's not to say I know it all, far from it, just that the books seemed to me to be making no attempt to explore different angles or areas of the broad church that is VWs.

> “my OCD wouldn't allow me to walk past a book on VWs without adding it to my library”

Etzold's *Chronicles of the People's Car Volume 1* went out of print in 1992, yet remains the definitive reference for the minutae of production changes. Want to know about the war years? Chris Barber's deep, deep *Birth of the Beetle* is never going to be bettered. Coachbuilts and Cabriolets? Bob Shaill and Keith Seume's title of the same name has got them covered. True, more of these desirable rarities have come to light since its publication, and can now be tracked and discussed via a couple of excellent internet-based registries, but as solid, well-researched. background reading, it is still a fine body of work. If you're looking for buying and restoration tips, Lindsay Porter's *VW Beetle and Transporter, guide to purchase and DIY restoration*, which was first published in 1986, still stands up to the test of time. Throw in John Muir's seminal '*Compleat Idiot*' and your choice of coffee table picture books specialising in your preferred 'look' and you've got yourself a pretty comprehensive armoury of VW literature, covering the primary facets of our hobby.

Perpetuating the myth

So why is it that any new book that comes out on VWs, seemingly regardless of the title, still has the obligatory chapter on Hitler and the development of the Beetle, with the same old black and white photos we've all seen a hundred times before? I guess it's the same reason every mainstream newspaper article insists on perpetuating the myth that all VW Bus owners are either hippies or surfers.

Like most of you I'm sure, I tend to flick through any new publication – be it a magazine, book, newspaper or journal – skim read a few headlines, go in deeper on some captions to pictures that catch my eye and make a mental note to read the bits that interest me in more depth later. If it's a VW book and I see that bloody picture of Hitler chuckling as Doc. Porsche explains the intricacies of one of the scale model Beetles, I know straight away a chunk of the book at least is essentially going to be plagiarism. How could it not be? What more could possibly be said about that picture that hasn't been said before? And that doesn't bode well for the rest.

If I find captions to be factually incorrect in a purported specialist book or, worse still, banal, I'm really turned off. And sadly, that was precisely what happened when the latest offering on Beetle Cabriolets landed on our desks recently. New edition it proudly proclaimed across the cover. Good stuff, I thought, I like Beetle Cabriolets. But the quick flick revealed that damned Hitler picture, again, along with countless photos of cars that weren't Beetle Cabriolets and dozens of abominable caption *faux pas*. What really upset me though was the specialists and suppliers section at the end. Autocavan? Big Boys Toys? Wizard Roadsters? Need I go on?

Out of respect for the people who might not know better and be tempted to buy a book like this, only to find half of the specialists listed went out of business last century, I would have thought the very least the author could have done is made a few quick phonecalls to check the references. Or even just Googled them. It's what all the kids are doing these days. ■

Essex, Herts and Cambs
SPLITTERZ
VW & Air-Cooled Club
www.splitterz.co.uk
OCL 467M

Few clubs cover as much UK territory as the Splitterz, whose members claim Essex, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire as their stomping ground

Splitterz

We check out the UK's only tri-county VW club

Words Gary Dunlop **Photos** Gary and Tony Andreetti

Splitterz started as an informal meet in Chelmsford, Essex, with the first official gathering held on January 15 2004. As the year progressed, Splitterz continued to meet in larger and larger numbers at the Army and Navy pub in Chelmsford, until, on the first anniversary, the club was told the pub was to close. A new location at the Horse and Groom on Galleywood Common in Chelmsford was found, and they now meet there on the second Thursday of every month. On January 9 2014 the club hosted their 10th anniversary meet, with lots of faces, new and old, putting in an appearance.

> “Don't stay away if your daily is your only available runner”

The Chelmsford meet regularly attracted members from the Essex / Hertfordshire border, so a second meeting place was found in Bishop's Stortford and now meets on the last Thursday of every month at the Coach and Horses in Thorley.

June 2006 saw the addition of a third venue for Splitterz, this time nearer to the picturesque city of Cambridge, at The Lazy Otter in Stretham, on the A10, on the third Thursday of every month.

Splitterz also have an active forum that links all three chapters of the club and enables members to keep in touch, share their projects and arrange club meets and events, as well as club camping trips to most VW events throughout the year.

In past years we've held an annual BBQ at Galleywood Common, with 200 cars being the record attendance. We have a lot of members with families that come along to shows for club camping, and it's great to see the next generation of members enjoying themselves. Once they're asleep, there's always a fire, a few drinks and plenty of conversation to keep the adults happy. Captain Morgan is popular with several members!

Meets are always informal and, although VAG cars are encouraged, don't stay away if your daily is your only available runner.

As the club entered its eighth year, it was felt it was time for a revamp of the club. A changing VW scene, where a Beetle is no longer the cheap first car for a new driver that it was, meant retaining a purely air-cooled and pre-1990 constitution would have resulted in an ageing and declining membership. Deciding a lively club needs lively young blood in it, the decision was taken to open up the doors to all VW marques, including Audi, Seat and Skoda, of all ages. Now, as a totally inclusive club, we welcome all comers. ■

^ On route to another show. You know what they say – a club that convoys together takes ages to get anywhere…

CLUB SCENE

NAME: Splitterz

CHELMSFORD MEET: Second Thursday of every month at the Horse and Groom, Galleywood Common CM2 8PJ

BISHOP STORTFORD MEET: Last Thursday of every month at The Coach and Horses, Thorley Street, Thorley CM23 4AS

CAMBRIDGE MEET: Third Thursday of every month at The Lazy Otter, Cambridge Rd, Stretham, Ely CB6 3LU

MEMBERS: Loads, and growing

WEB: www.splitterz.co.uk

^ The club line up at last year's Battlesbridge VW show

< Love the painted wheel and hubcap combo on Chris' Notch

EVENT LIST

Apex Festival

When: May 9-11
Where: Lydden Hill Race Circuit, Kent
Web: www.facebook.com/apexfestivals

All Types VW Show

When: May 17-18
Where: Bodelwyddan Castle, North Wales
Web: www.dubshows.co.uk

Circle Yer Wagens IOM

When: May 22-26
Where: Isle of Man
Web: www.circleyerwagens.com

Run To The Sun (RTTS)

When: May 23-26
Where: Newquay, Cornwall
Web: www.runtothesun.co.uk

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PRODUCTS

Selling a new product? email volksworld@ipcmedia.com

> Halfords Professional tools

From: **halfords.com** **Price:** **£150**

Looking for a comprehensive tool kit that will last forever and won't break the bank? This 200-piece set has pretty much every hand tool you'll ever need to work on your VW in a robust carry case. The best part is, should you manage to break any of it, it all comes with a lifetime guarantee. This kit usually costs £300, but is currently being offered at half price. Get one while you can

^ Split vent trims

From: **Aircooled Accessories.com** **Price:** **£60**

These vent trims have been carefully made to replicate the original versions that were fitted to '56-'63 Deluxe Buses, but Aircooled Accessories have gone one better and also offer longer sets to fit 1964-on Split Screens. This is a first, as these were never produced by Volkswagen or any other manufacturer. Made from stainless steel, each piece has been fully polished to a deep shine

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SATIN FINISH
EXTREME CHASSIS BLACK
PRIMER

< Eastwood Extreme chassis paint

From: **frost.co.uk** **Price:** **£18.89**

Fancy a hard wearing chassis paint you can spray on for a great finish? This could be for you. It's said to be solvent, brake fluid, petrol, scratch, chip and corrosion resistant. Editor James has just painted the floorpan on his '66 with it and was very impressed

v Digital gauges

From: **vwheritage.com** **Price:** **£54.95 - £265**

VW Heritage have teamed up with Smiths to offer an exclusive range of digital gauges for air-cooled VWs. In the line up are rev counters, speedometers, clocks, fuel, oil temperature and pressure gauges and voltmeters, all of which have been designed to work with original equipment senders where appropriate.

We think these look very neat, and the added accuracy of digital gauges gives extra peace of mind

RPM
X 1000
SMITHS
RPM
x100

> Cordless grinder

From: **sealey.co.uk** **Price:** **£179.94**

Hands up, how many of you have an angle grinder with a taped together cord that you cut through? Art ed Steve has. This cordless grinder has a 115mm disc diameter and is powered by an 18V battery that recharges in one hour, plus comes with a second battery so you don't need to worry about running out of juice. With 7,000rpm coming through its 800W motor, it should prove up to most jobs on your VW. The usual list price is £240 but, if you buy it before May 31, you can save almost £60

3 Beetle door panels to suit your budget

^ '70's OE

£94.50

From: **Machine 7**

Trimmed in top quality, textured grain, black vinyl and heat sealed to the hardboard backing with OE-style pressings, these are the perfect replacement for a 1970's Beetle. As an added bonus, there are generous elasticated pockets on both door cards

^ '60's OE

£256.50

From: **VW Heritage**

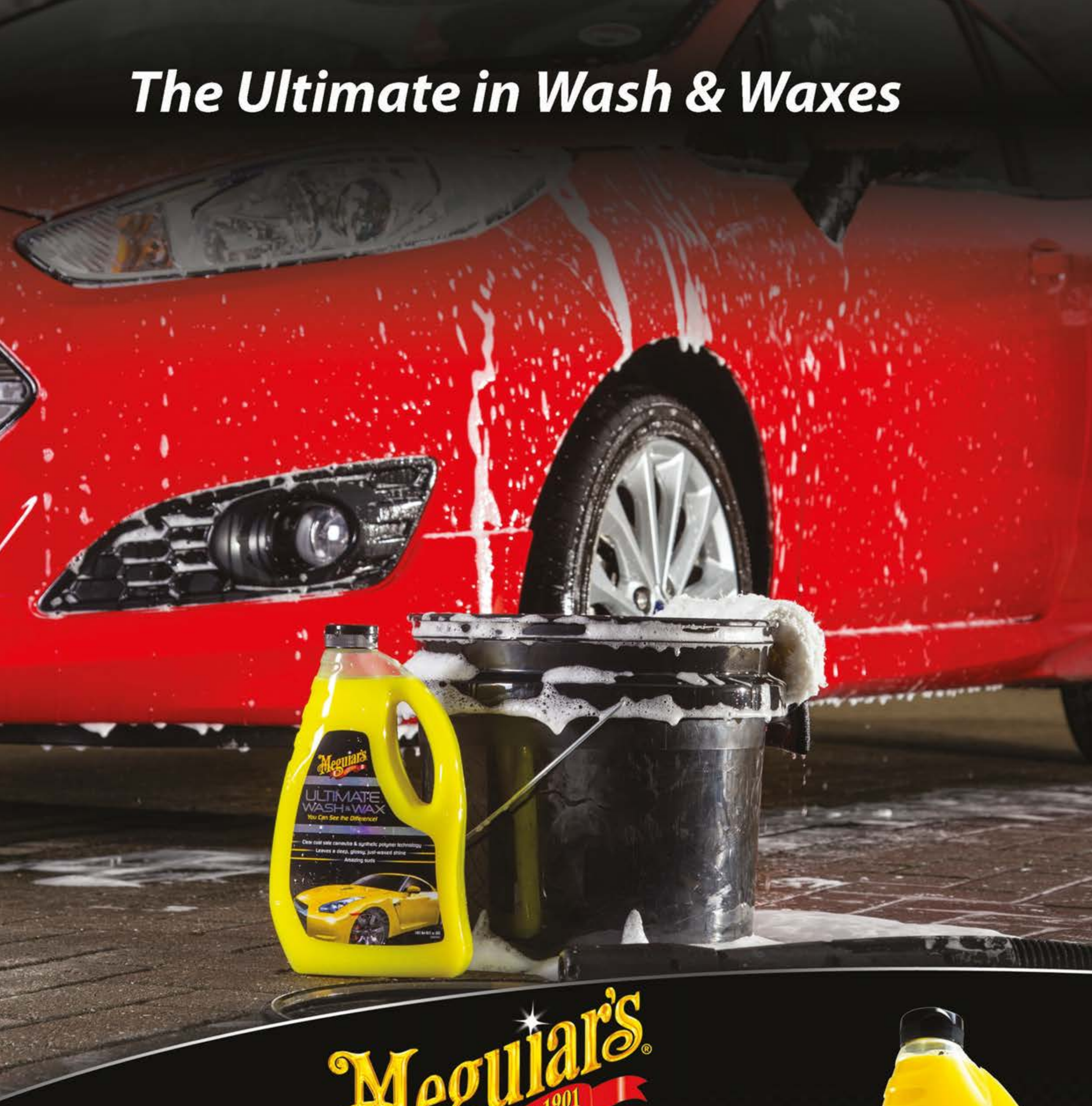
If you are looking to finish your '60's Beetle with a period perfect interior, then VW Heritage have just what you need. They can supply the full range of two-tone door cards from TMI in a choice of materials and colours. Note, all come with a nearside door pocket only

^ Bespoke

FROM £300

From: **Bernard Newbury**

If you are looking for something a little more individual, then you can't go wrong with custom-made door cards. Bernard Newbury is a name that has set standards in upholstery for as long as we can remember. A set of bespoke door panels start from £300, with the only limit being your imagination



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Amazing suds

LETTERS

Share your views on the VW scene – email volksworld@ipcmedia.com

Letter of the month

WIN!
A Meguiar's Gold Class wash and wax car care kit

Meguiar's
Gold Class

Milford's impeccably maintained '63. Clearly the handbrake works, too!

High voltage

Milford Brown, USA

Hello *VolksWorld*, I enjoyed your recent piece on tracing electrical faults, and was intrigued to hear how most of the wiring problems you've encountered are the result of poor attempts at earlier repairs. However, among the remaining 10%, one I didn't see mentioned was the one that came with my '63 Beetle. Wondering why the headlights seemed so dim, I measured their voltage by pulling the connector slightly off the sealed-beam light unit to get my voltmeter probes to touch the metal prongs. Much to my surprise, I discovered that of the six volts at the battery, the headlights were only receiving 4.5 volts. By measuring voltages at various points throughout the car relative to a ground wire connected directly to the battery's negative post, I discovered that the loss was the consequence of a number of poor connections.

Early VWs used terminals with a screw that clamped the wire, but my '63 has the 'newer' crimped-on connectors. Pulling them off and pushing them back on didn't fix the dim headlights, and I discovered a small voltage drop – the consequence of some resistance – where each connector was crimped onto its wire.

The solution was to solder each connector to its wire, using a drop of non-corrosive liquid flux at the wire tip, followed by heating and a bit of solder. Note that there are a number of these connectors between the battery and the headlights, including at the floor switch and several places behind the dash. Doing the latter made me appreciate the ease of working 'behind' the Beetle's dash vs other cars where those connections are only accessible by tearing things apart or lying on your back on the floor and looking with a portable light to see what's up there.

Another point where soldering seemed appropriate was the fuse block. Once it is removed from the vehicle, you may find that there are two pieces of brass pushed into a slot together at each fuse. Again, since brass is subject to corrosion, a drop of solder will ensure continued good electrical continuity.

I reported these difficulties and their correction many years ago in the US Vintage VW Club of America newsletter, but since the vehicles are considerably older now, it seems worth passing along this cure for low voltages again. A 12-volt system will accomplish the same 'work' with half as much current (watts = volts x amps), so the voltage drops may be less than what I found in my 6-volt car, but when the cure is so simple – if a bit tedious – why not drive a Beetle that is at its best electrically? This cure was much simpler than replacement of the entire wiring harness, which should only be necessary if the insulation on the wires has been abraded to expose the copper conductor. The same '63 Beetle has been my daily driver since I bought it in 1988 for around-town travels, leaving our more modern car for my wife to drive. I even take her out to dinner in it occasionally, a reminder that a much younger '62 Beetle was our only car during the early years of our marriage.

I should also say that Haynes manuals have been indispensable in maintaining this Beetle. While everything is almost the same as the '53 Zwitter I bought when it was a year old, everything is different in detail, and knowing how each part should be adjusted has kept it going all these years.

Hi Milford, thanks so much for taking the time to write such an in-depth email and sharing your experience with us. You're a good egg. - JP

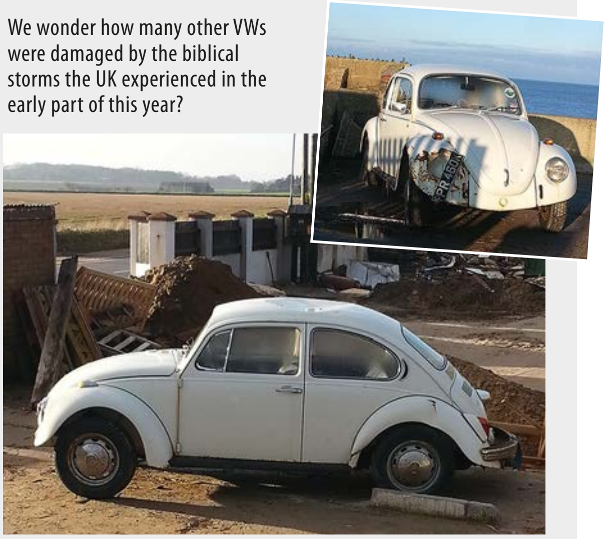
Fun Bus

Gerardo Jarquín Hernández, Costa Rica

Hi *VolksWorld*, I'd love you to include this photo of the 1975 Kombi getting a wash in your magazine or on your facebook page to see how many 'likes' we get.

Hi Gerardo, we have no idea what the pic is about but when someone is having as much fun as she is, who are we to decline your request! - CO'T

We wonder how many other VWs were damaged by the biblical storms the UK experienced in the early part of this year?



Storm Bug

Simon Hughes, Halesworth, Suffolk

Hi all, I thought I'd share a couple of pictures taken in Walcott, Norfolk over Christmas after the village suffered one of the worst tidal surges in a long time. This Bug looked a sorry old sight after it had suffered the mother of all car washes, ocean-style.

The sea rose over the sea wall, washing solid concrete defence walls away, and I can only assume the Beetle was washed around on land and the damage caused at that point. It looked to be very original, inside and out, with a red interior, although if I remember it hadn't been taxed since 2011. There was a static caravan parked alongside, although no one was there to ask more details.

The magazine is a credit to you all. Thanks

Hi Simon, thanks for sending in the photos. It's easy to forget just how severe the storms were, but seeing this picture brought it all back. It not being taxed, we can only presume it was a project and not being driven at the time, but we wonder who owns it? If the owner reads this, we would love to hear the full story from them. - CO'T

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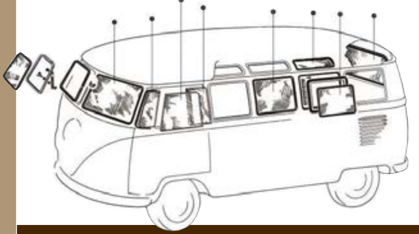

K00592 Front edge section of sunroof opening

Short sill in front of rear wheel arch 14 inch 50-62

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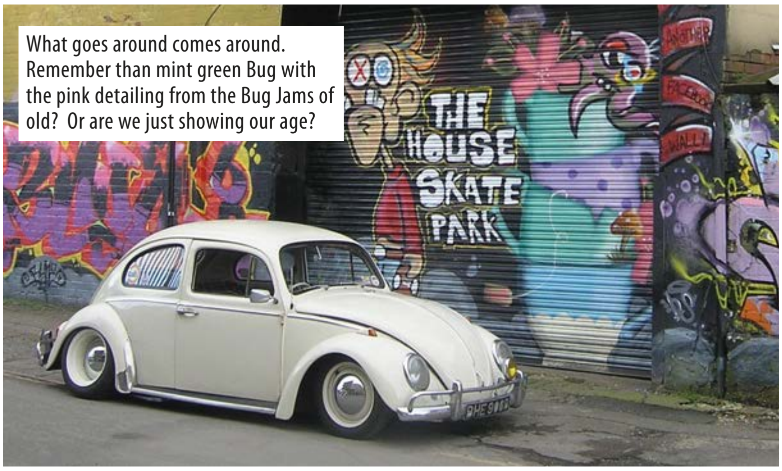
Car of the month

WIN! If you send your car in to Readers' rides, you could win yourself a Sealey digital multimeter

What's with the negative vibes, man?

Andy says further plans include lowering the car…



What goes around comes around. Remember than mint green Bug with the pink detailing from the Bug Jams of old? Or are we just showing our age?

Andy Coldwell – 1964 Beetle

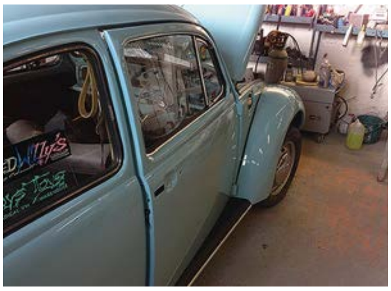
Hi *VolksWorld*. I got my Beetle in April 2013. It was pretty sorted when I got it but I have added the rear blind, which is an original '60's one. I have also had the rear wheels banded to eight inches and all four have been powder coated. The seats were in good condition but the same couldn't be said about the springs, so I stripped the seats down in order to fix all the broken ones and to re-upholster them. I've also fitted heat exchangers and tweaked the ride height a bit. The engine is a standard 1200 and runs like a dream. Further plans are to lower the front some more and enjoy driving it this summer, but I may sell it at the end of the year as I fancy a nice Karmann Ghia.

> "I had the rear wheels banded to eight inches"

Looks like a narrowed beam up front to us, and an Aussie rear window blind out back

Just the bumpers and a few bits of trim still to go on, and the old girl will be reet again

Looks like Eamon's car has just received a coat of our Ed's favourite colour – Invalid Blue!



Wicked Willy's, Hot Tuna, Big Boys Toys… That takes us back to a time of rad shorts and bad hair

Eamon Harris – 1971 1302

I bought this car in 1991 when I passed my driving test and it was my daily through my apprenticeship. While I was with mates in Cornwall I picked up some window adornments. There's even some 'Hot Tuna' stickers on the quarter lights. During my short driving use, I had this mad idea of painting the sides a different colour. Well, I never got round to it, but a friend of mine decided to have a go at it while I was away on a training course – hence the patchy rescue job I tried.

So into the garage at home she went in the summer of '93, and the door was closed, with the promise to get round to finishing her off in a few weeks. I kept making this promise on a monthly basis until I moved into my own place in 1999, and got married the same year. In 2000, I got a 'phone call from my dad saying he needed the garage back and I had to go and shift my Bug. I arrived at my parent's house with a jerry can of petrol, poured it into the tank, connected the jump leads to my dad's car and turned the key. On the third attempt, she spluttered into life.

As I looked in the rear view mirror, I could see my dad emerging through the toxic plume of smoke now rolling down the road. I thought The Red Arrows had done a low fly past down our road! The brakes were seized on, the tyres were flat, but at least she lived.

Fast forward to mid 2011 and, while I was at work, my wife and father-in-law had arranged for this restoration to commence. We're hoping it will be finished for my 40th birthday, later in the year.

Alice Gervin-Dwyer – 1972 1302LS Karmann Cabriolet

It's not every day we see such a stunning car being daily driven, but Alice Gervin-Dwyer is a lady who likes to drive her car, as her husband, Liam, explains: "Alice bought this 1972 1302LS Karmann Cabriolet in 2008. I don't know if it was the car or Alice I fell for, or maybe it was both, but when she arrived to a show for the first time with her top down (fnar fnar) I thought to myself, 'I'll have you'. And now I do!

"Now, before Alice kills me for that last comment, let me tell you about her car. It runs a 1300cc engine and, when she bought it, there were original Fuchs on it, but she changed them for steelies with whitewalls for a more classic look. The paintwork has a few scratches, as you would expect being on the road all the time, but Alice wouldn't change it. She's a total VW fan and loves driving her Cabrio. Our friend, Beag, re-wired it as it was a mess and, apart from that, Alice has used it every day to take her to work in the hospital, weekends away with her mates or camping at a VW show. It has been used by so many friends for weddings, including our own of course, so if anyone tells you a convertible is something you can only use for those 3.5 sunny days we get a year, then I would advise they talk to Alice. If they can get a word in…"

That's Liam's sister, Mags, on the left and Alice on the right photographing the photographer

When Liam saw Alice for the first time in 2008, it was love at first sight. Note the Fuchs the car wore then

Stock steels, caps, rings 'n' flaps really change the look of the car

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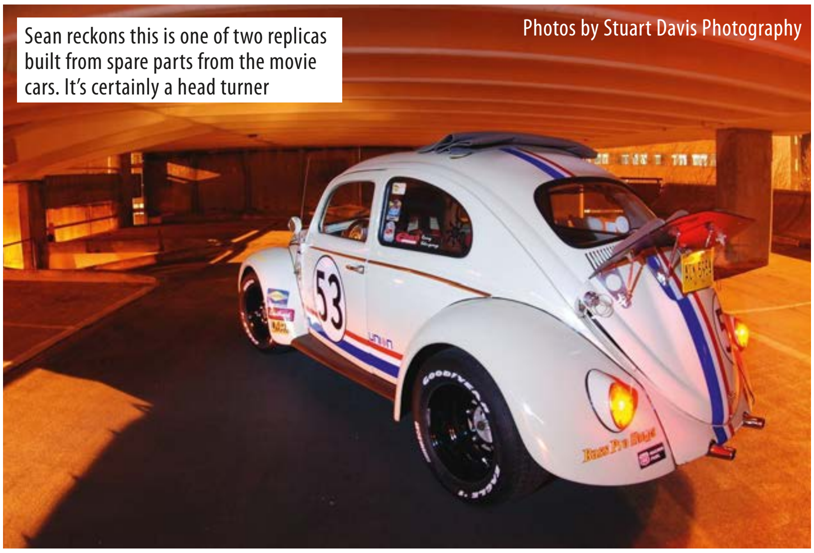


Sean reckons this is one of two replicas built from spare parts from the movie cars. It's certainly a head turner

Photos by Stuart Davis Photography

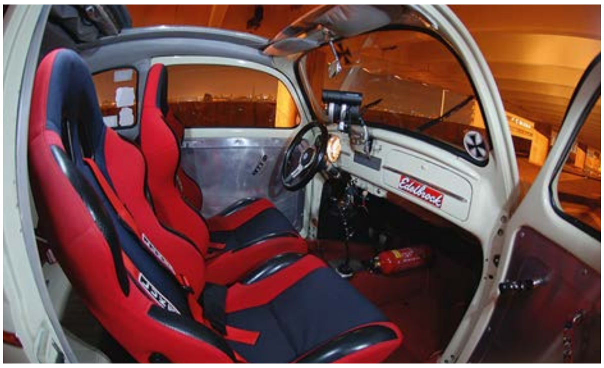
Sean Jordan – '64 Herbie replica

Hi *VolksWorld*, this is my Herbie replica that came from California. It is one of two replicas made from all the spare parts from the *Reloaded* movie and was built by Randy Carlson of Old Bug in the USA. I have owned the car for five years and have put a lot of work into it. The engine was leaking badly when I got it, so was stripped and rebuilt. The engine bay was returned to how it should be with a bit of panel beating and new pieces welded in. I then removed most of the interior and fitted three-point harnesses with bucket seats, replaced panels, fitted a Monster tach and a fire extinguisher. The front beam was also replaced with an adjustable one.

The exterior was faded, so I acquired and replaced most of the stickers, then I had it re-numbered and striped in vehicle wrap by a local print shop. The wheels and tyres are from a NASCAR. The wings, bonnet and decklid are all fibreglass parts from the movie, and the back spoiler was hand built in the States. The car is a real head turner and is very fun to drive. It goes quiet well for a Bug and corners like it's on rails.

I'm married and we have one child. I've been into Volkswagens since I was at school and have had a few Bugs, Golfs and a Split. I sold my Campervan and was looking for a toy to ease the blow when I came across this Beetle by chance, and it was pretty local at just 20 miles away. When I went to look at it I liked it and I got a good deal as it needed work, but if I ever get enough money together the car will get the full nut and bolt rebuild. For now, I'll keep driving it and enjoying it.

It's nice to see some people doing *Herbie Reloaded* replicas these days. We're digging the wide wheels and tyres all round look



Sporty recliners, Luke harnesses, Mountney steering wheel and ali door panels are a far cry from the stock Beetle interior

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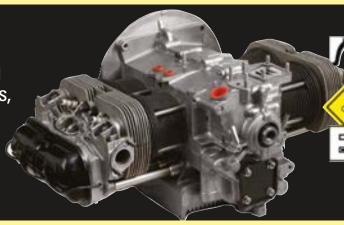
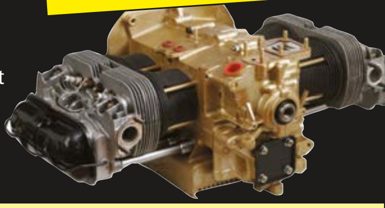


Our basic engine: reground crank, new main, big end/small end and cam brgs; **new** valves, springs, barrels, rings, pistons, oil pump, plugs, seals and gaskets. Crack-tested heads and crankcase; refaced flywheel and seats.

GOLD ENGINE



This engine features everything offered by the 'Silver' engine but with the addition of brand new cylinder heads, making this a nearly new engine.

DIY PRICE: £949

BIG BORE RED ENGINE *DIY PRICE: £1049*

These are high-performance alternatives, built to 1641cc. Assembled with the same new components as the 'Silver' engine, but fitted with big bore barrels and pistons, brand new cylinder heads **and** a new 009 distributor. Built to run on unleaded fuel. Exchangeable for 1300 or 1600cc.

BIG BORE PLUS

As above, but built with a brand new crankcase.

DIY PRICE: £1,499

BIG BORE SUPER STREET

Same specification as the 'Big Bore', but fitted with a fast road camshaft.

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GREEN ENGINE *DIY PRICE: £999*

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New: main/big end bearings, valves, guides, springs, barrels, pistons, rings, small ends, oil pump, plugs, seals, gaskets; refaced flywheel; reground crank; crack-tested crankcase & brand new heads.

DIY PRICE: £999

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DIY:£1,849

Fitted with new main and big end bearings, barrels, pistons and rings, new cylinder heads, plugs, seals, gaskets, refaced flywheel, reground crank, crack-tested crankcase.

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DIY PRICE: £2,099

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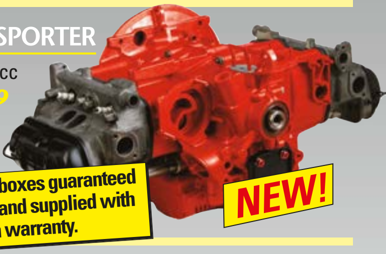
WATER-COOLED TRANSPORTER 1900-2100cc ('83-'90)

New: main/big end bearings, valves, guides, springs, barrels, pistons, rings, small ends, oil pump, plugs, seals, gaskets; refaced flywheel; reground crank; crack-tested crankcase and cylinder heads.

DIY PRICE: £1,399

BIG BORE WATER-COOLED TRANSPORTER



In exchange for 1900cc. As 1·9 (left) but with 2000cc pistons and liners, and new heads. ***DIY: £1,799***

In exchange for 2100cc Injection. As above but fitted with 2200cc pistons and liners, and new cylinder heads.

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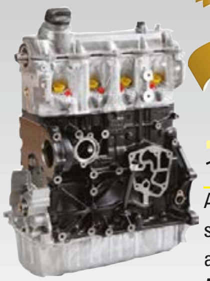
NEW!



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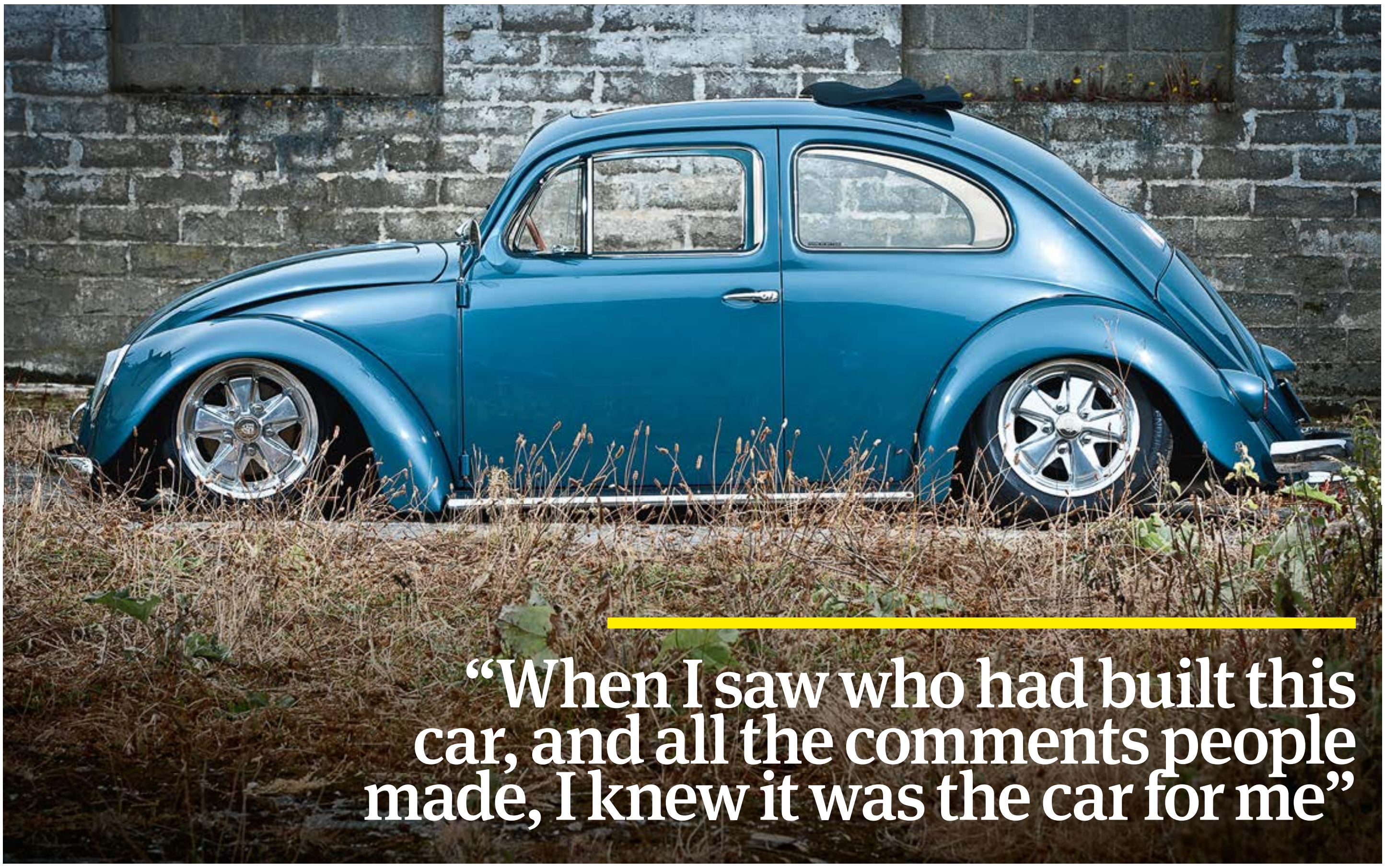
Oval the moon

Everyone likes to say they've built their own car, but sometimes the thrill of ownership can be just as exhilarating

Words Mike Pye **Photos** thru-a-lupe photographic



“When I saw who had built this car, and all the comments people made, I knew it was the car for me”

On full drop this car sure has the look. Did you notice the body is dechromed?

So you want a cool VW, right? These days, if you don’t hanker after a Bus, that probably means a slammed, narrowed, aired, Fuchs’d ragtop, preferably one with a small back window, or two. Let’s say you’ve got a budget of 10 grand and the desire to make it happen. You start looking at the classified ads and the parts catalogues and pretty soon it dawns on you that what you’ve got to pay for the right base car added to the cost of the parts you need to transform it into the look you lust after doesn’t equal your budget. And that’s without getting into the nitty gritty of repair welding, panel replacement, body prep, paint and all the boring stuff you haven’t budgeted for like wiring, brake parts, seals and nuts and bolts. Oh, and let’s not forget the enormous investment of time all that calls for as well.

So what are you going to do? You could set your sights lower or, alternatively, you could look at buying a built car. Silence. Tumbleweed drifts by on the wind. Clock chimes ominously. The built vs bought debate will rage on forever more, and never the twain will meet, but when you look at the figures, both fiscal and dimensional, there is absolutely no contest between the two. Throw a young family into the mix and it really starts to make a lot of sense.

Tidy profit

You’ll have heard it said a hundred times that you couldn’t build it for the money but, when it comes to a fully painted, modified car like this, the saying is almost certainly true. Matt Edwards, an estate manager from down Plymouth way, knows this scenario only too well. At just shy of 39, he’s had a lifetime of VW input, starting with parents who owned them to being taken to shows by his own and friends’ parents to owning and restoring a ’66 Split. But having inadvertently made a tidy profit on the Camper he performed a rolling restoration on over a four-year period, he started looking for a replacement vehicle. “We had just moved into a new place and I had nowhere to store the Bus, so I chucked it on eBay and was just lucky that it was at the time when the Bus thing started to go crazy,” he recalls. “I had calls from all over the place about it, and it ended up going to Germany.

“The money I got for it I call my V-Dub Monopoly money, only to be spent on VWs, so straight away I went looking for something to replace it with. I really like Ovals, especially late ones, and what I really wanted was a ragtop, on air ride as the roads around where we live are terrible, and original paint, so I wouldn’t have to worry about it like I did my Bus.

“Having just had our first little boy [Archie, 15 months at the time of writing and counting] I knew there was no way I would have the time to do up another car myself – even now I only just about find time to clean this one when he’s asleep! – and I have a very physical job, so when I do get to sit down after a day’s work, I just need to relax.

“As soon as I saw this car, I knew it was the one. It ticked all the boxes, and as I had made quite a good profit on the Camper it wasn’t even like I was spending money I ever really had, so I was happy to pay the price being asked,” Matt told us excitedly.

Although he admits now he was buying the car regardless, he did do some research before making the 300-mile trek from Plymouth to Chorley in Lancashire, discovering the car’s restoration was well documented on the website of Kustom Coach Werks [KCW] in Colorado, USA. “If you buy a built car, unless there’s photographic evidence, you don’t know what’s been done underneath, whereas with this I could see everything that had been done to it. And when I saw who had built this car, and all the comments people made, I knew it was the car for me, and I’m over the moon with it.”

As a small point of order, the car was not actually built by Kustom Coach Werks, but by KCW employee, Dustin Martin aka ‘Big Dizzle’,

TECH INFO

BODY: Stock 1956 Oval, dechromed and refinished in L227 Strato Silver (Blue)

ENGINE: Late single-port 1200cc, stock

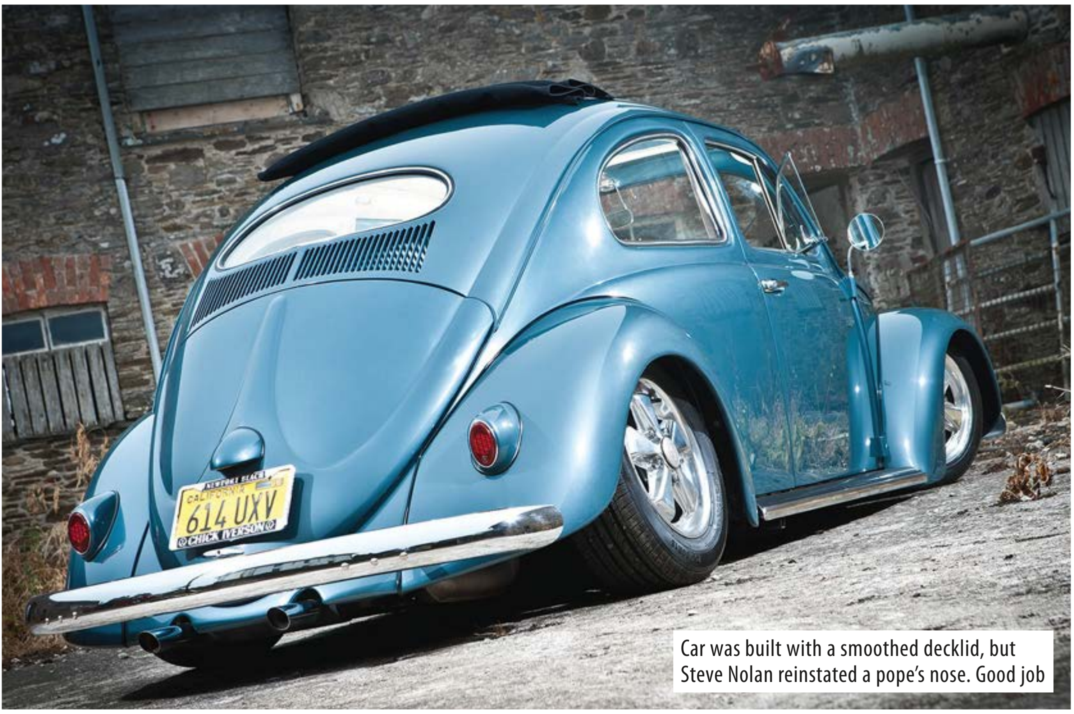
GEARBOX: Stock 4-speed, non-syncro first

WHEELS AND TYRES: 5.5 x 15 MWS Foosh, polished; 165/45-15 and 195/50-15s

SUSPENSION: 8 1/4-inch narrowed KCW single offset air bag beam with no front shocks; dropped spindles; Shockwaves combined bag / shocks on the rear; nitrogen tank and valves

KCW badge has been left in place as a mark of respect to Dustin Martin, the KCW employee who built the car out of hours in their shop

No compressor, just an old commercial gas tank filled with nitrogen. Check out the size of those air lines!



Car was built with a smoothed decklid, but Steve Nolan reinstated a pope's nose. Good job

Early small logo Berg shifters are very sought after today

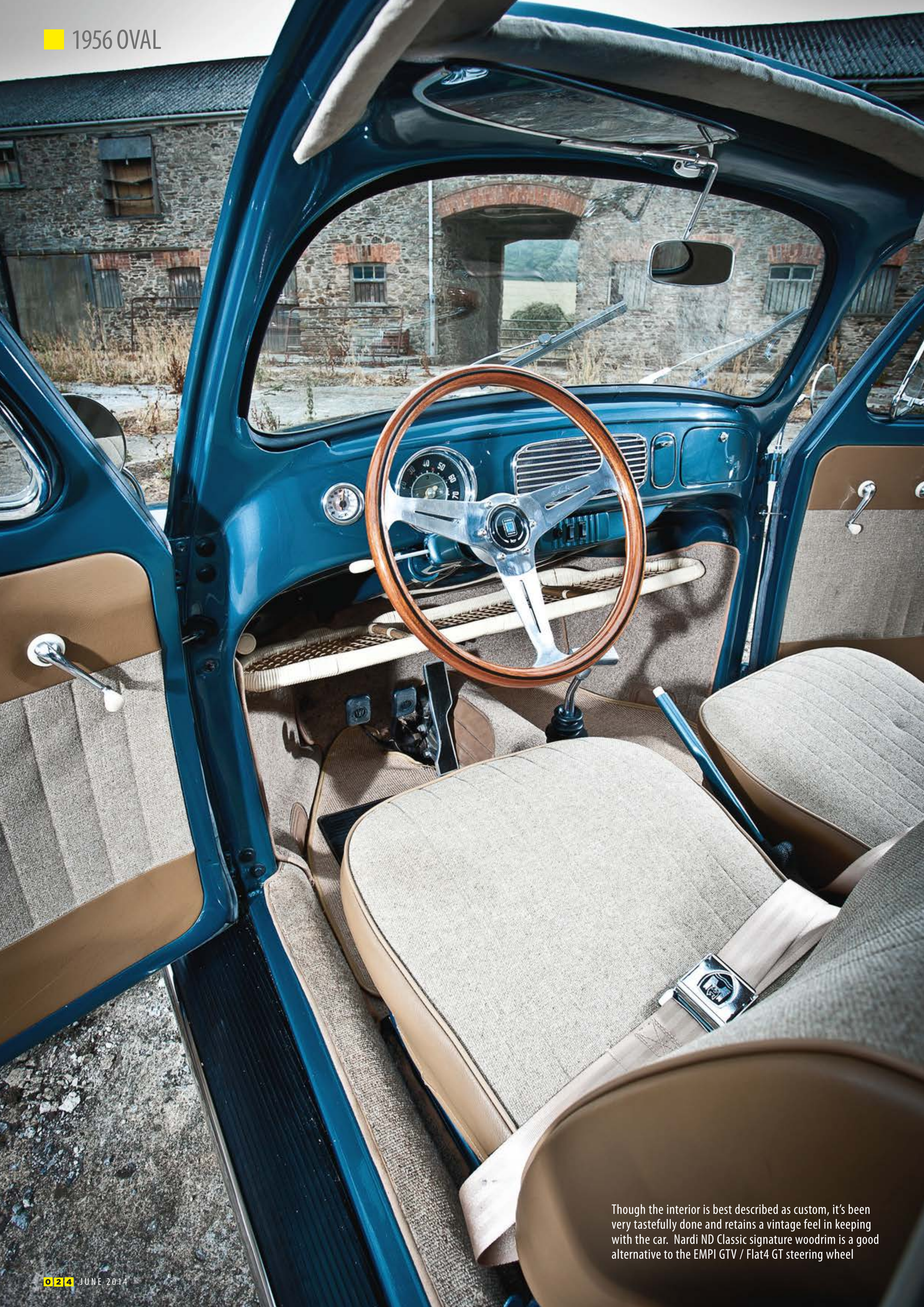
This is what we meant last month by the Silver Cross pram look! Wheels are MWS Foosh

Often called Porsche 911 headlamps, these are Bosch H4 lenses

Air ride rocker switches have been neatly fitted into the stock Oval radio blanking plate

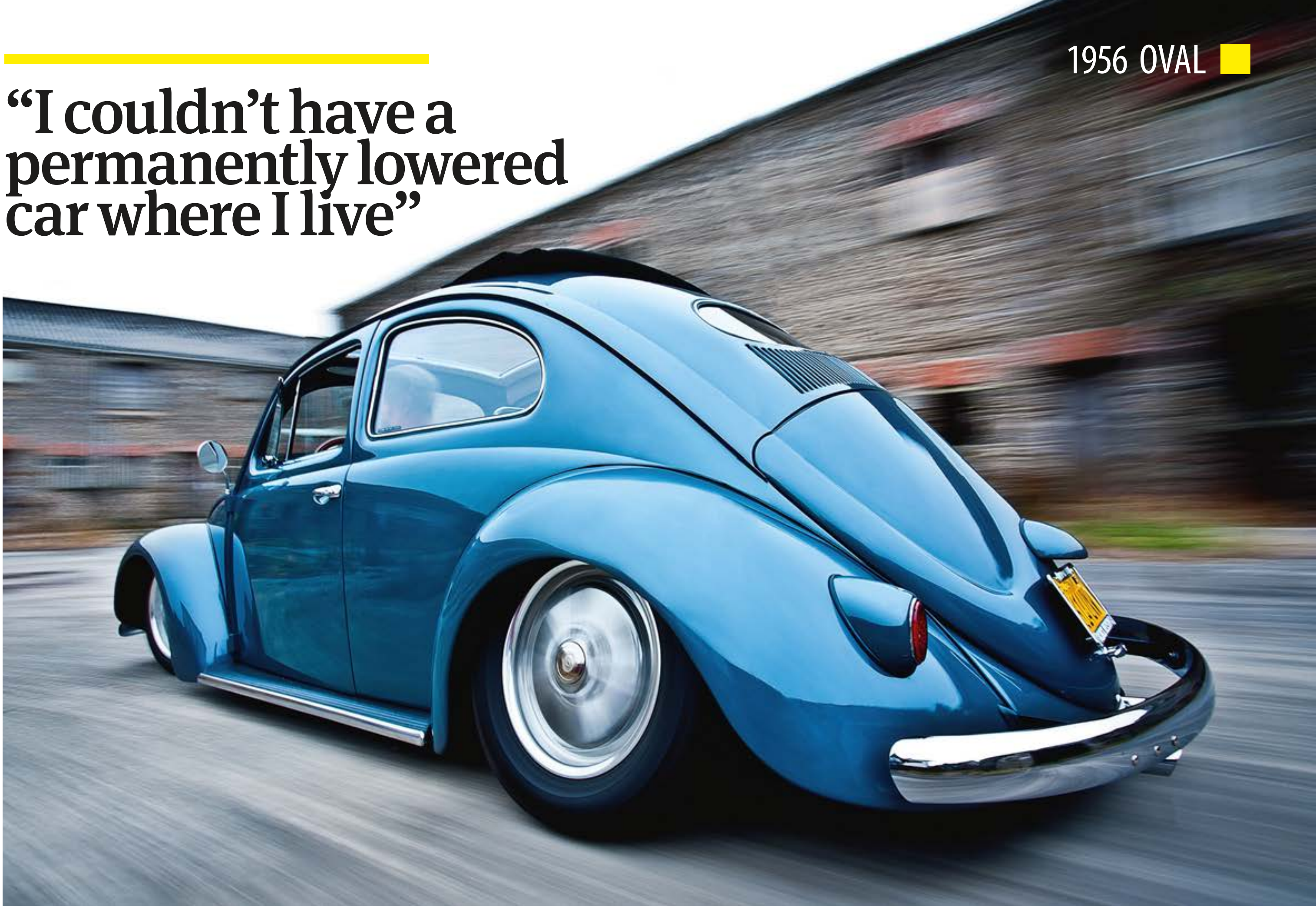
These engraved cigarette lighters were given away by VW dealers in the '50s. Imagine that today!

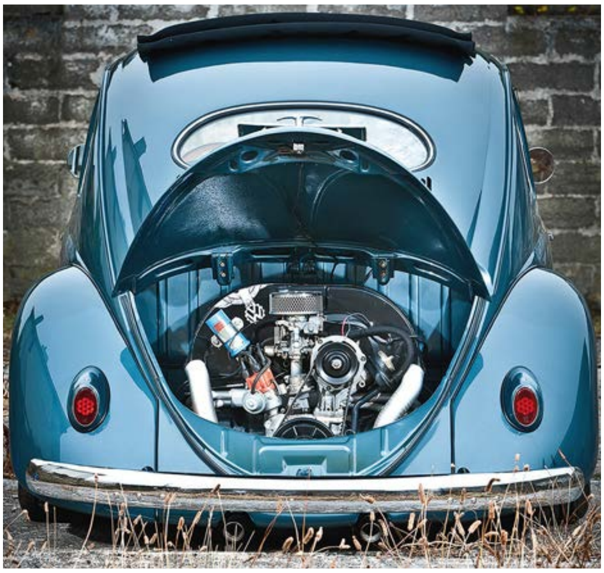
Twin needle air gauge shows front and rear bag pressures on one gauge. Red is rear, black is front



Though the interior is best described as custom, it's been very tastefully done and retains a vintage feel in keeping with the car. Nardi ND Classic signature woodrim is a good alternative to the EMPI GTV / Flat4 GT steering wheel

"I couldn't have a permanently lowered car where I live"





Even with an 8¼-inch narrowed beam and no inner arch mods, Matt reckons the car has a full turning circle, though admits the front tyres rub the back of the headlamp bowls on full drop

Engine is currently a '73 vintage 1200, as fitted by Steve Nolan, but Matt would like to change that at some point to something more period

after hours and at weekends in the KCW workshop. It's pretty clear from the 28-page thread that accompanies the pictures what work went into the car, and also that all along it was built to sell. Considering it was an after-hours project, and done almost singlehandedly by Dustin, the timeframe it was built in is quite incredible. From what I gleaned, the car was picked up on October 22, a month later the metalwork was done, including fitting new front and rear clips and repairs to areas such as the rear body mounts and front flitch panels, and by December 11 it was in primer. By January 2 it was a painted 'shell, on February 12 it was driven round the block for the first time, and on March 20 it was sold and on a transporter heading for the UK. Job done then, as far as Dustin was concerned. The surprising thing to find out was that all this was in 2006 / '7, so how come we had never seen the car before last summer? Here's where the story takes a couple of twists and turns.

Hell hath no fury like...

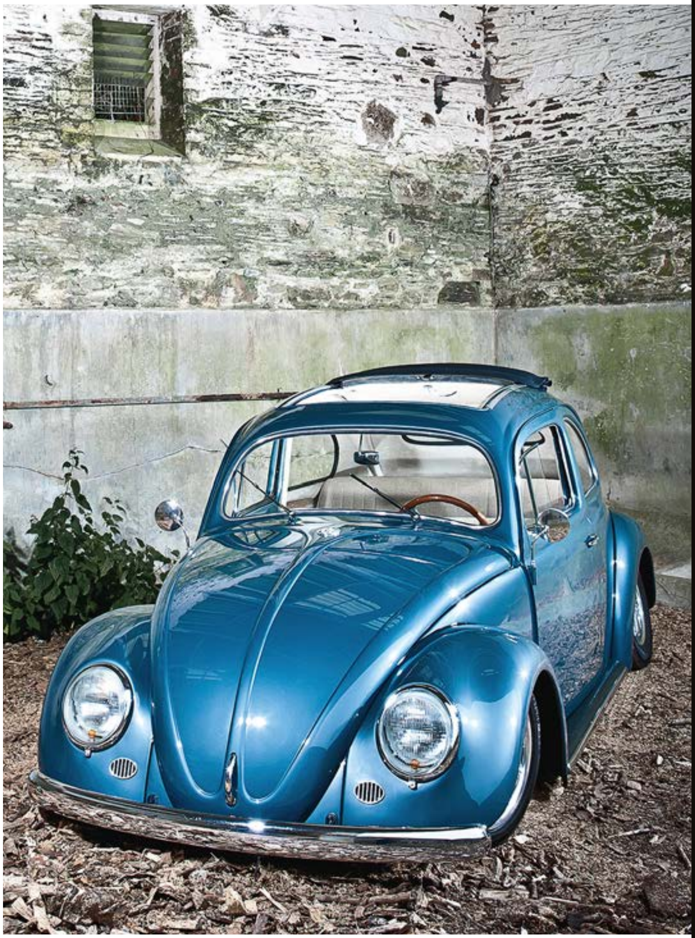
As I understand it, the fella that bought it (for a shade under the imaginary budget mentioned at the start of this feature incidentally) shipped it over and had big plans to fit a hot motor and make a number of other changes. But when his missus found out that it was the holiday money that was going to finance said plans, she, well, flipped, taking her rage out on the as-yet-unregistered car. It then sat in its vandalised state in a garage for some five or six years before being sold on again, which was when Steve Nolan at Wolfsburg VW got to hear about it. "I could see it was a nice car," recalls Steve, "well, would be if it were right..." By 'right' Steve means with windows that weren't smashed, wings and panels that weren't dented and scratched and with an engine in.

Though Steve's more commonly associated with Split Buses, he set to re-commissioning the Oval with gusto, making a few changes more to his liking along the way. "I had the paint camera matched and repainted all the wings, valances and bonnet and engine lid. I also put a pope's nose back on the previously smoothed engine lid, added the MWS wheels, and fitted a good 1200 engine I had around.

>

BEHIND THE WHEEL

"It's brilliant to drive. I drive it around with 80psi in the front and 100psi in the rear and it's just so nice. It doesn't bounce around, even without any front shocks fitted, and the air ride is unbelievably quick. If I use it sparingly, a tank lasts quite a long time. I went through four of five tanks last year and, even when I thought it was empty, I got about another 20 lifts out of the tank. It costs £15 a month rental and £20 to fill the tank, but they also charge me £17.50 to collect it. It's not too expensive, if I use it sparingly... It's worth it though because it looks damn cool when lowered!"



There's no denying this is a sweet looking car. But of course it is, it's a '56 Oval in one of the best colours VW ever came up with

I don't think it had ever really been used, so it just needed everything mechanical going through. And a bloody good clean. It was riddled with glass everywhere."

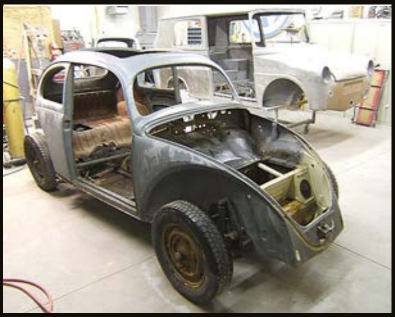
Neither Steve nor Matt had any prior experience with air ride, so both were candid in their appraisal of the system on this car, which comprises a KCW 8¼-inch narrowed airbag beam with a single, offset, six-inch bag and Shockwaves combined shocks / bags on the rear. There's no compressor, just a 10-litre nitrogen tank behind the rear seat, so when it runs out that's it. Opinion is divided over whether this is a good idea or not, but Matt's happy with it and both said it lifts and drops at great speed. Interestingly, Matt seems most happy with the practicality it affords: "We live in the middle of nowhere and have to drive down single-track lanes riddled with potholes, and with six inches of grass and mud in the middle. I just press a button, raise the car and drive over it. I couldn't have a permanently lowered car where I live."

Up the PACE

Since buying the car just over a year ago, Matt has mostly just been enjoying driving it, and being part of PACE, Plymouth Air-Cooled Enthusiasts, but he's had the handles re-chromed, changed the exhaust and done a couple of other minor tweaks to personalise it. "I was a bit of a magpie with my Split, always buying stuff for it, but I don't think this car needs anything. I can just get in and drive it and not worry about it. Having said that, the only thing I think lets it down is the engine. I don't think it needs a fast one, just something a bit more in keeping with the car."

Whatever your opinion about buying a built car, from the enthusiasm and excitement evident in Matt's voice, it was clear it was most definitely the right decision for him. And we're pretty sure his wife, Suzy, agrees, too, as instead of Matt spending every weekend under a car in the garage, the whole family gets to go out and enjoy the fruits of Dustin's labours together. I think that's what's referred to these days as a win win situation. ■

THE BUILD

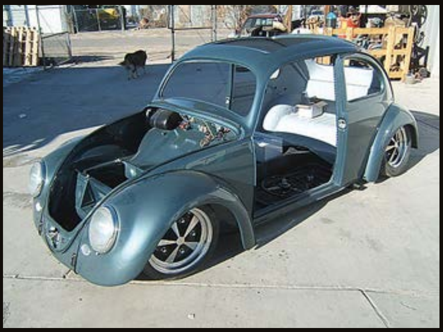


STRIP SHOW
The '56 in November 2006, about a month after it came into Dustin Martin's possession. Stripping and blasting done, welding next...

BACK END
...starting with a replacement rear clip. Note the bumper mounts have been removed at this point for repair work

FRONT END
A new front clip was also welded into place, presumably due to rust in the spare wheel well. Dustin did all the welding and body repairs himself

FLOORPAN
One new battery tray panel and a repair to the gearshift support hoop later, the 'pan was given a coat of X-O Rust satin black enamel paint



PAINT
Fast forward to the start of January 2007 (check the date in the first caption) and the painted body is back on the 'pan and the car's rolling on Randars

INTERIOR
By the middle of January, the wiring is done and the interior is coming together. On February 9 the engine was fired for the first time and on March 20 the car was on a boat bound for the UK. That's quick work!

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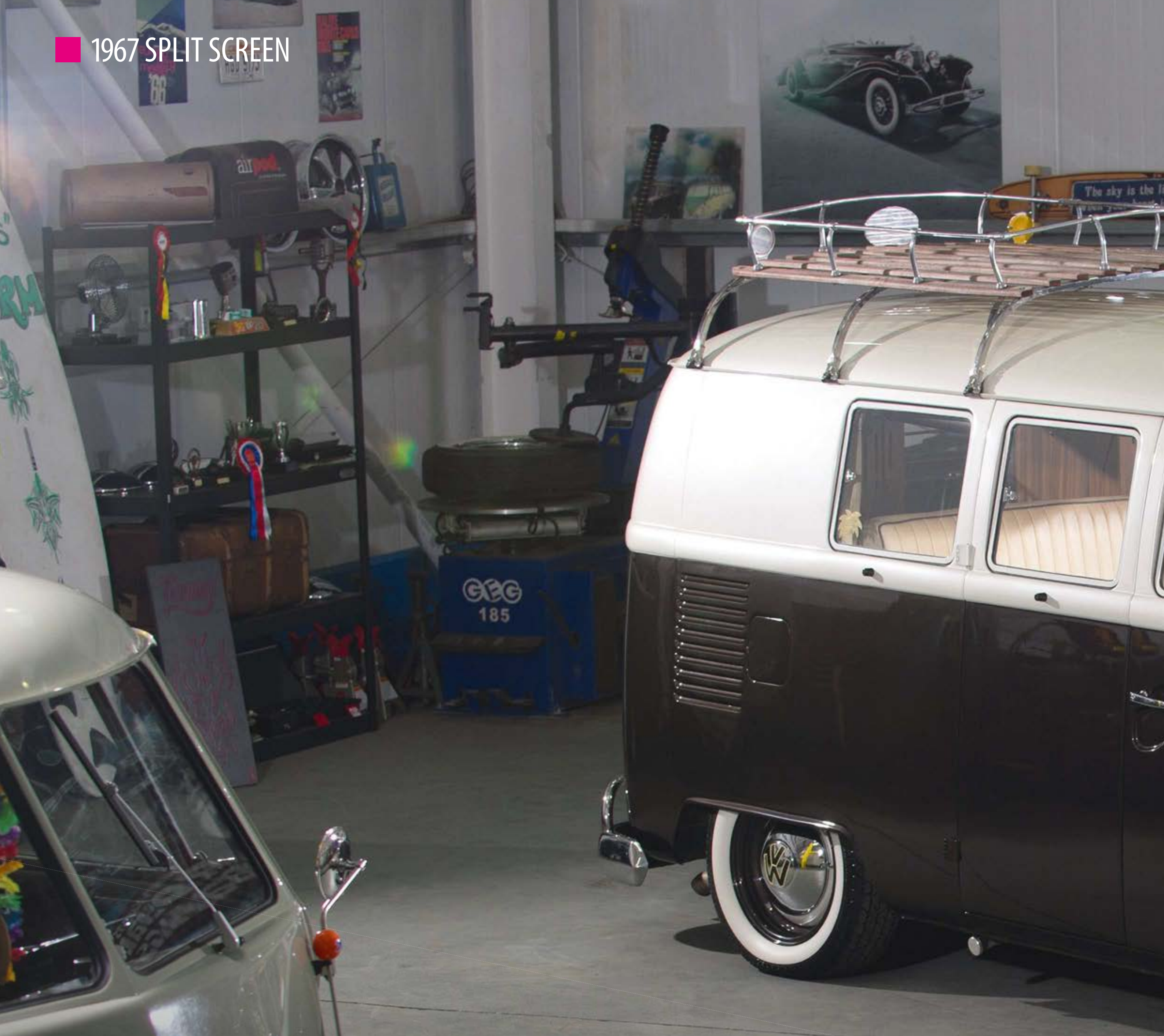


I should Coco

You're about to read a story packed with ups and downs but thankfully, due to commitment and perseverance, it has a happy ending

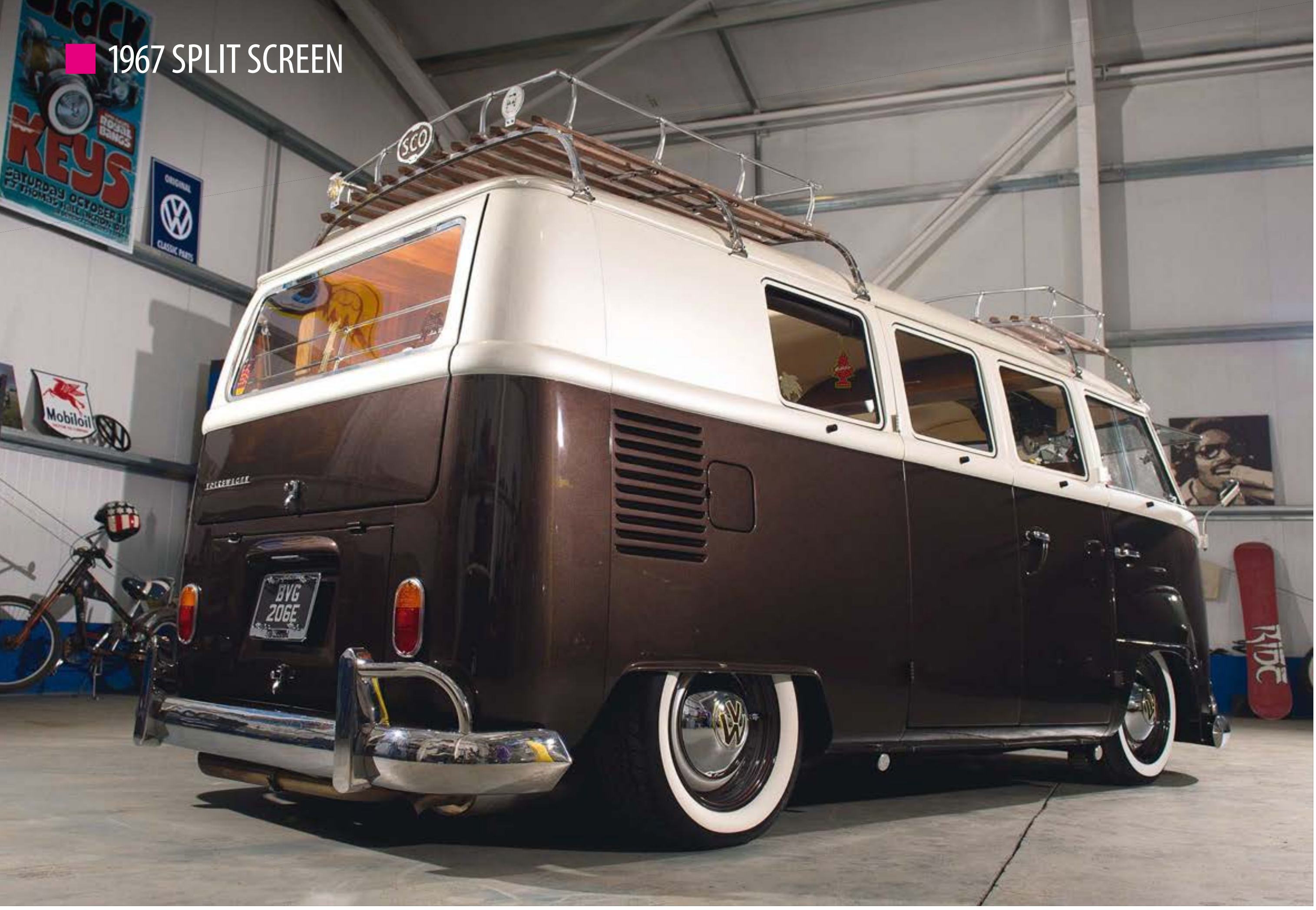
Words Ivan McCutcheon **Photos** Adrian Brannan

We've been trying to feature Colin Nicol's 1967 11-window Camper for years, three of them to be precise. But every time we tried, there was another lame excuse why we couldn't. That's said very much with tongue in cheek, as the fact is Colin wasn't willing to let us shoot it until he was 100% happy with it. We didn't give up, though, we kept on pestering him, and now we're finally doing it, we're over the moon.

To be frank, not giving up when faced with adverse circumstances is why this Bus is such a masterpiece. Colin has been through some bad times during this project. The majority of us would have thrown in the towel, but having got to know the man behind the Van, I know his psyche is to forge on towards the goal. Colin being an ex-footballer, I think that analogy is even more fitting.

The kick off

The story kicks off when Colin got turned onto Buses. He'd been a Beetle boy since he wasn't old enough to drive and had one as his first car but, after seeing Chris Lambourne's 11-window at The *VolksWorld* Show, his head was turned. Later, Andy Carroll's 1954 Barndoor Samba and then the quality of Aaron Tully's Samba sealed his future. "I knew I needed to start searching for one. I went to see 10 UK Buses and they were tea bags, absolutely f*****! I wanted an 11-window, as I like the fact you can hide the cupboards in one. I then got a copy of *Ultra VW* and saw an advert for a California



^ As the Bus was originally US spec, Colin retained the towel-rail bumpers, though obviously they're now chromed

import '67 and was straight on the 'phone. This was about 4.30 on a Saturday afternoon. The guy said he'd give me second refusal, as he'd already had someone who was keen 'phone him. I was pished off. True to his word though, he called me back as the guy didn't call back when he said he would. This was about 7.30pm. I got straight on to two friends, Mikey Smith and Alan Campbell, and we set off on an 18-hour round trip to see the Bus. They're both as mad as me, so it was like a Volkswagen version of *The Young Ones*. We had the music turned right up and kept missing the roads we were supposed to take as we were into the tunes. We spent hours trying to find a barn in the middle of nowhere in Norfolk.”

> “I need a lot of power. Have you seen the interior of my Bus? It's like a cathedral!”

So what was the Bus like? “It had come from California, but was originally sent from Hanover in November '66 to New Orleans. It was L360 Sea Blue and L800 Cumulus White then, but the guy selling it had it painted it luminous green. It looked like a highlighter pen, it was terrible, but it was pretty solid. It needed a new dash, the long side panel and a fair bit of work on the front panel, but I didn't care, so I bought it.”

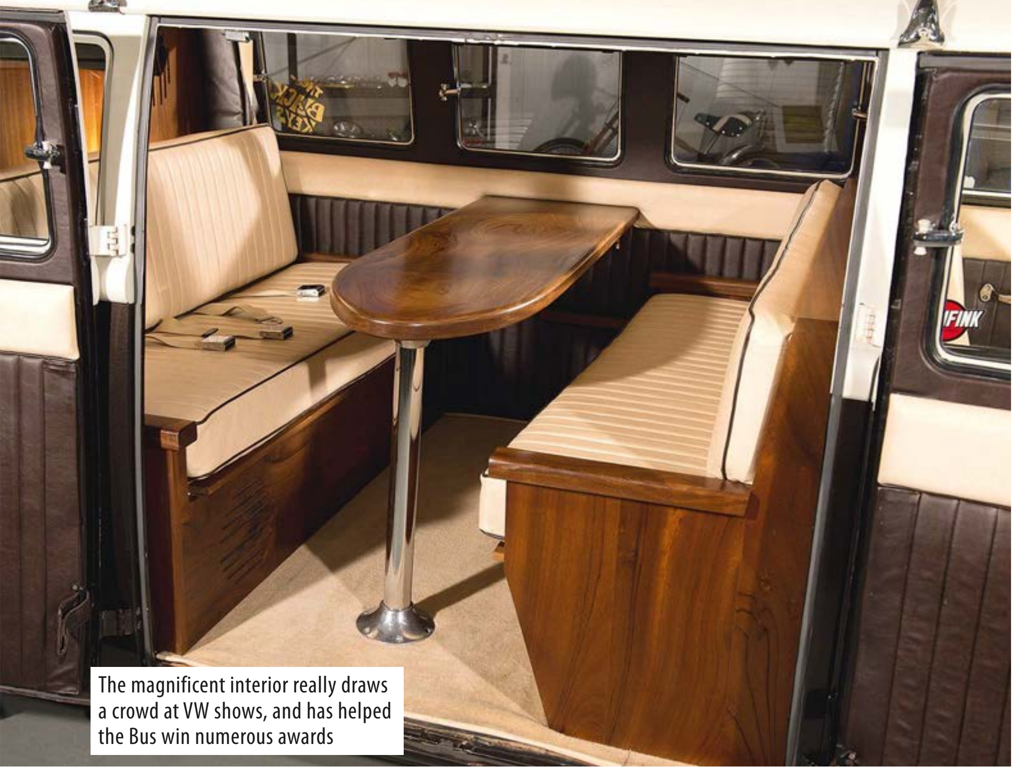
Sink and bubbles

Colin was working as a technician at a Mercedes main agent at the time and, although he would have loved to have had the Bus restored and painted there, it was simply going to be too expensive. Therefore he entrusted the work to a VW specialist. I have been told the full story, but feel it is best to gloss over the bad experience by saying the results were far from what Colin had prescribed: “The paint started to sink and was bubbling up everywhere. In the end, it was done three times and each time it was worse. The mechanical work was no better. The IRS conversion was done really badly, and it nearly killed me twice on the motorway. I couldn't drive it. It ate three sets of bearings in a month and was driving me to destruction, literally. I basically flushed 10 grand down the toilet, as we had to strip the Bus and start again.” Colin did this with his good friend and now business partner, Craig McInally.

Cathedral look

As the underside was fully detailed and painted, removing the iffy IRS was akin to keyhole surgery. Fortunately, Colin fell on his feet this time around as he met Daz Chandler of Aircooled Performance in Northallerton. Daz removed the conversion, fabricated new brackets and made sure this time the rear end was spot on. He also built a 2110cc, fuel injected, turbocharged engine, which could have a whole feature devoted to it alone. Daz certainly knows how to build a full-on motor, and this was proved on the rolling road when it produced 260bhp. Although Colin drives it with the boost turned down, even with a modest charge it still makes 180bhp. On the subject of the rolling road, Colin told us: “I booked it in at Performance HQ in Dunfirmline and, when I arrived and Russell saw my Bus, he said, ‘When I booked a VW Bus in, I wasn't expecting it to look like this. I'd better take my overalls off and put my suit on!’” He was even more impressed by the figures it made but, as Colin so eloquently puts it, “I need a lot of power. Have you seen the interior of my Bus? It's like the inside of a f****** cathedral in the back!” The engine is bolted up to a beefed-up IRS Bus transmission from Rancho Performance Transaxles in Fullerton, California.

The steering system has been completely revised using a Creative Engineering steering rack conversion that gives the Bus a more modern feel. “It makes a huge difference,” reports Colin. “It takes all the play out of the steering and you really notice the improvement on a motorway when there's a side wind, as you aren't shitting yourself while trying to keep it on the road!” The steering might have been improved, but the air-ride suspension Colin has fitted doesn't exactly add to the sporting performance. In fact, from what he tells us,

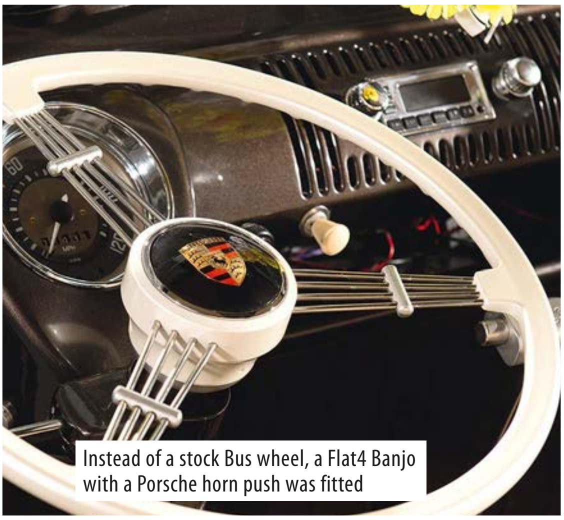

The magnificent interior really draws a crowd at VW shows, and has helped the Bus win numerous awards

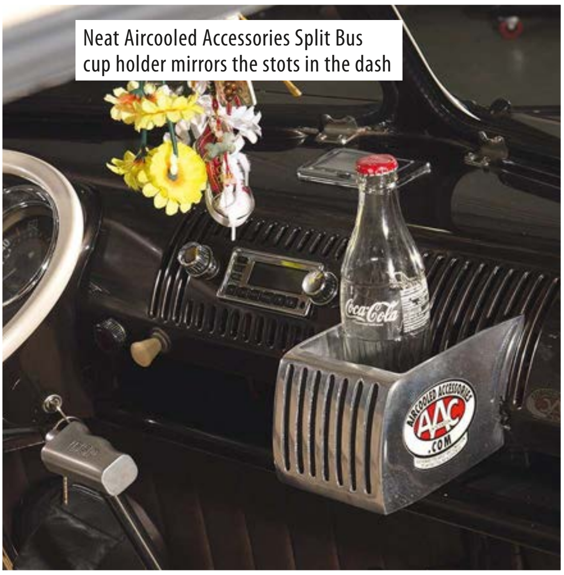
All of the trim work was taken care of expertly by David Hannah

THE INTERIOR

Having enquired with some of the respected VW Camper interior specialists and realised he was punching above his weight when it came to the financial side of things, Colin's mother recommended a retired friend called Mike Garrow who could not only do the job but do it to a first class standard. The woodwork is crafted from Coula edulis, a tropical hardwood better known as African walnut. The interior was designed by Colin, then turned into reality by Mike. The seats and panels are trimmed in brown and cream leather-look vinyl, while the headliner is a combination of brown around the window surrounds and cream overhead.

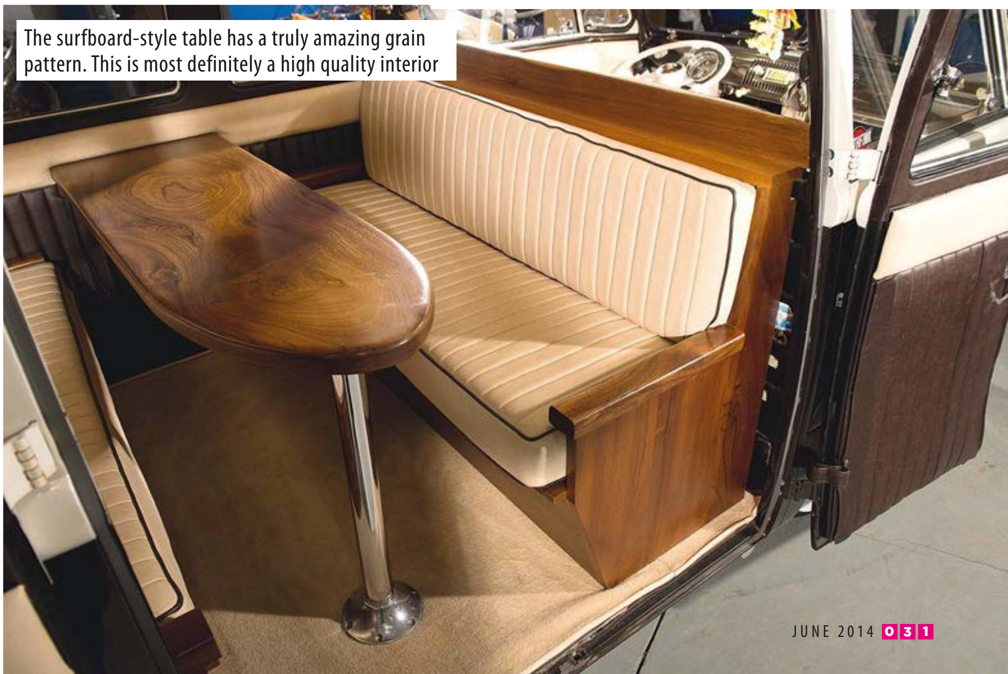
What you can't easily see is that this Bus is packing a serious sound system as Colin is into his music big time. "Music is my first love, VWs are my second, but I like to mix it," he says. The system weighs in at 6,000 watts, thanks to three bridged Kenwood amps powering three monster subs through a crossover and cab mounted components and some 6 x 9s. "It knocks ten bells out of my leisure battery," he says with a grin. ■

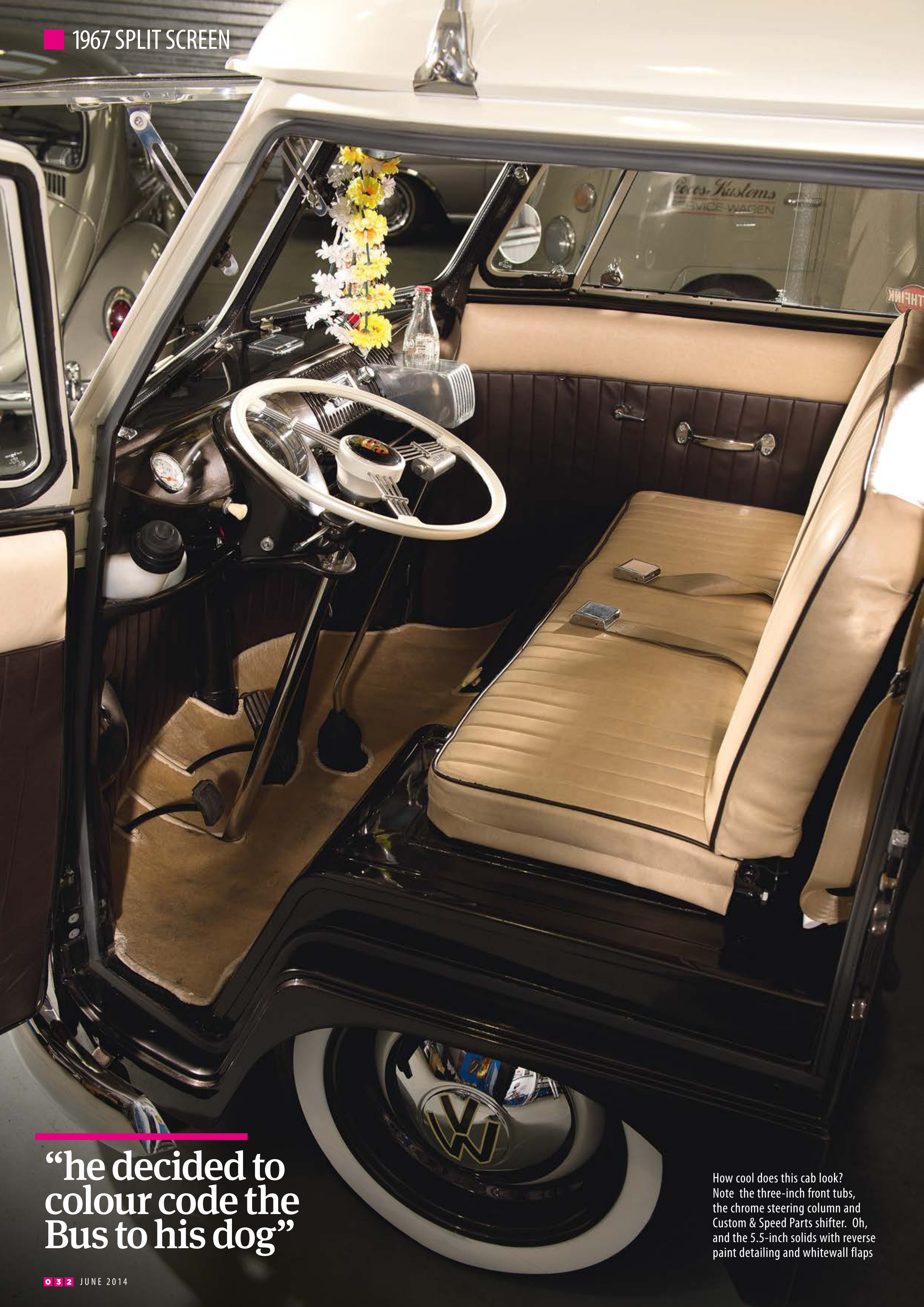

Instead of a stock Bus wheel, a Flat4 Banjo with a Porsche horn push was fitted


Neat Aircooled Accessories Split Bus cup holder mirrors the stots in the dash

Rear cupboards hide elements such as the leisure battery, and a few stickers Colin has picked up along the way.

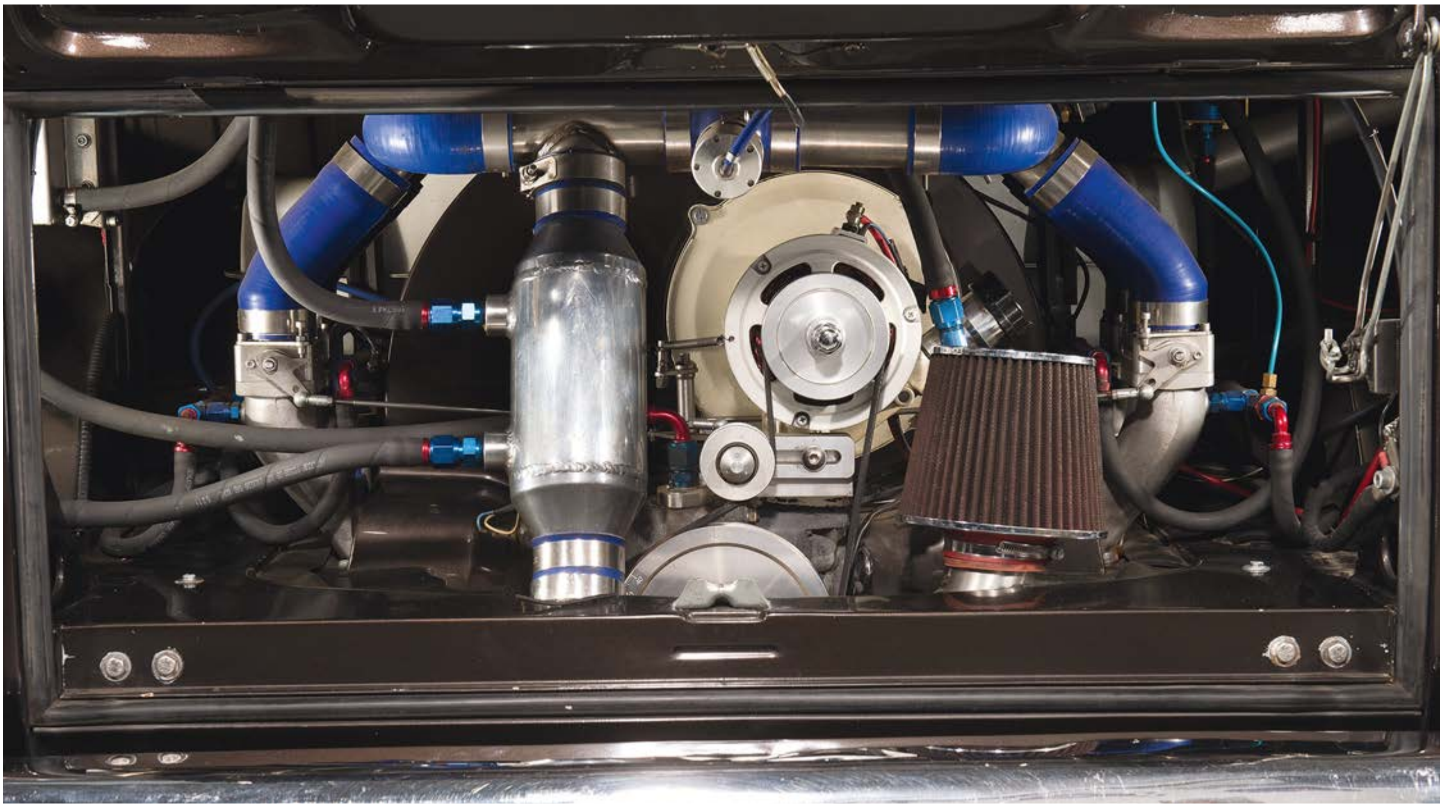
A trio of gauges and an air-ride control panel in the cab give the game away


The surfboard-style table has a truly amazing grain pattern. This is most definitely a high quality interior



“he decided to colour code the Bus to his dog”

How cool does this cab look? Note the three-inch front tubs, the chrome steering column and Custom & Speed Parts shifter. Oh, and the 5.5-inch solids with reverse paint detailing and whitewall flaps



The fuel injected, turbocharged, 2110cc powerplant was built by Daz Chandler at Aircooled Performance. It makes 260bhp on a busy day, and 180bhp on a quiet day, with the boost turned down

it is very much a case of form over function.

We still have to cover the paintwork and interior, and they're equally important elements of this Bus. The way Colin came to choose the colours is quite possibly the maddest we've heard of. He had a photo taken of himself standing next to the Bus when it was in the early stages of restoration, holding his new puppy – a boxer called Brook. The eureka moment came when he was trying to decide on the colours and was looking at the photo and decided to colour code the Bus to his dog. I kid you not! He then spent ages looking for the right 'boxer' metallic brown. "I searched the planet, and then one day Mikey Smith came in and saw I was on the computer and took over. Five minutes later, he'd found the colour. It's a new Porsche colour called Macadamia." The top half is painted in custom pearl white. The paintwork was taken care of by Peter O'Mally at Eastern Western in Edinburgh, in just four weeks.

Old Mike

The interior came about by chance, as Colin had been speaking to VW Camper interior specialists and was getting quotes ranging up as high as £16,000 for what he wanted. His mother told him he should speak to 'Old Mike', a friend of the family who is actually called Mike Garrow and who is retired master craftsman cabinet maker. Colin was in fits of laughter when he told us, "I called him and said you're watching too much *Loose Women*, get your overalls on! I went round to see him and, when he saw the Bus, he opened his workshop door and said, 'Get it in!' He had some wood he'd stashed away in 1979, which was left over from a re-fit of a bank head office in Edinburgh. It was African walnut and I thought it was perfect. I drew up the interior I wanted and we made it out of cardboard, then MDF, then finally Mike made it in walnut. The fittings are all brass from the 1800s. I used to go around every Saturday and work with Mike, but if I was five minutes late I got a bollocking. It was like being an apprentice again." The interior certainly looks the part, especially with the carpets and trim, which were done by a local trimmer called David Hannah. The carpets are done in the same material used by Rolls Royce, and the cream and brown trim is faux leather.

There's no question this project has been a major test of Colin's patience, but since finally finishing the Bus he's not just had some of the best times of his life attending music festivals and VW shows in it, he's also packed in his job at Mercedes and started up his own VW and classic Mercedes workshop, where passion and attention to detail are key factors. If you're on the east side of Scotland you should have a look at www.cocoskustoms.co.uk. ■

TECH INFO

ENGINE: VW AS41 crankcase; 90.5mm barrels and pistons; CB Performance 82mm forged crank; 13lb flywheel; CB 5.4-inch rods; Engle FK8 cam; CB 044 CNC round-port heads; CB 1.4:1 rockers; 30mm oil pump; 1.5-litre deep sump; 8.25:1 compression; VW Speed Shop turbo / injection system and billet engine pulley with magnetic hub; DTA S40 Pro ECU; VW Speed Shop stainless turbo header; Garrett T3 turbo; CB billet wastegate; Aircooled Performance custom stainless exhaust system

BEHIND THE WHEEL

"Although it makes 260bhp, I keep the boost right down when I do long trips. I need to as since fitting air ride it's like a rowing boat – you need to take a sea sickness tablet before driving it! It's f****** frightening! I have had to have the cab seat re-trimmed three times as my arse has bitten holes out of it. Go into a corner too fast and it's like woooooah! But the engine has been faultless. It's not just strong, it's reliable,too. The Creative steering rack has made a huge difference. Before I fitted it I had a really bad moment coming over the Forth Bridge due to side winds but, since that was fitted, it's like driving a different Bus." ■

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Diamond in the rough

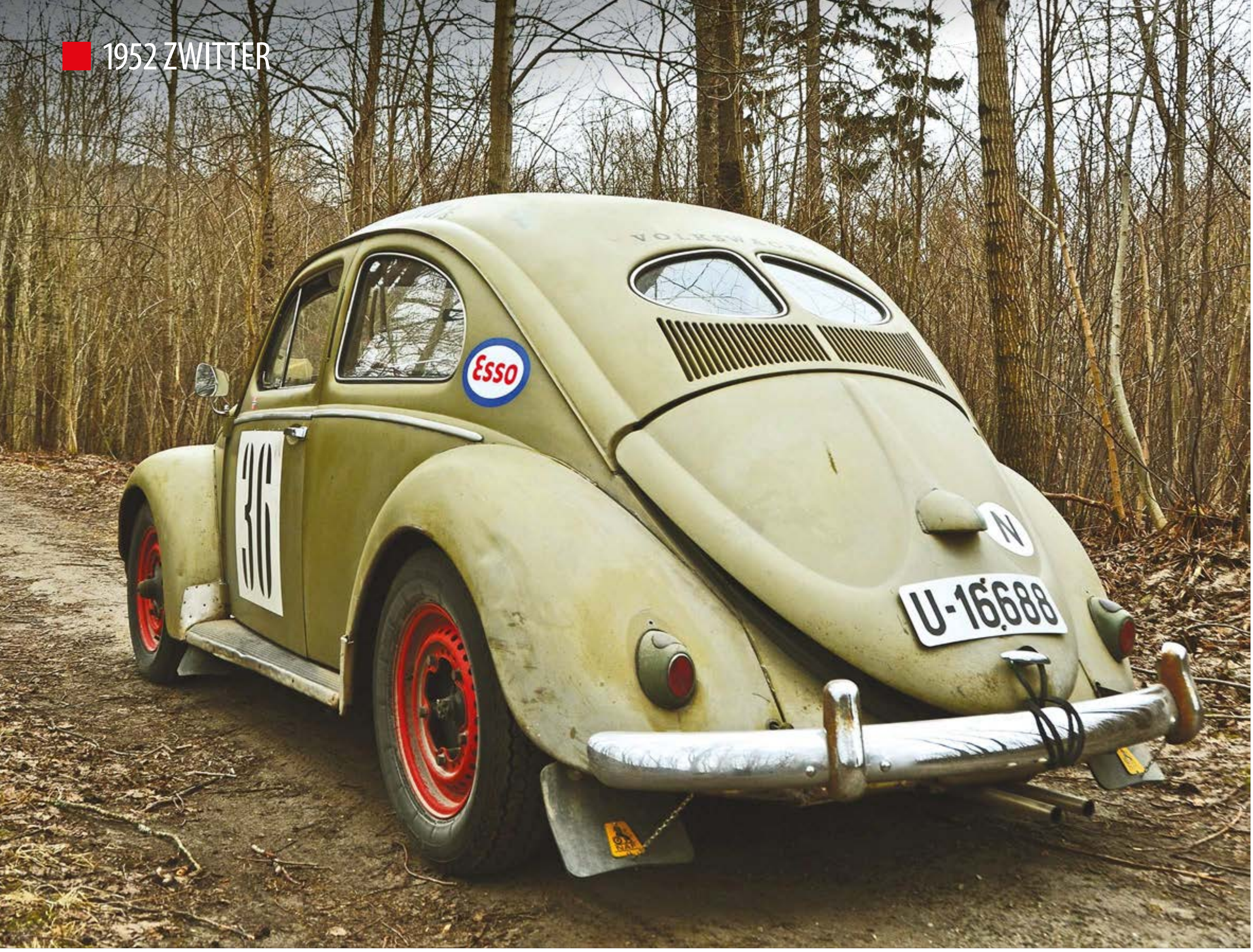
The new way is the old way! Take a look at one of the first Vintage Speed cars to come out of Norway

Words and photos Solveig Tofte

This car was found in an aluminium garage in the middle of nowhere in 2007. Actually, it was the middle of Norway, but that's more or less the same thing. Having been left sitting unused and unloved for quite some time, it practically begged to be rescued and put back on the road and, after passing through a number of hands, it ended up with Anders Lien from Trondheim, known as Alien by all who know him.

Alien immediately saw the potential of this rough diamond and, although this might have the vintage buffers grinding their teeth, what with it being a rare Zwitter model (built for just six months between October '52 and March '53 with a Split rear window and the new Oval dash), he had no plans of restoring it. Oh no, Alien had other plans for his shabby hermaphrodite.

To give Alien his due, he did attempt to tidy it up a bit, but all those years languishing in the garage had really taken their toll on the paint, and cleaning it in the conventional fashion had practically no effect. So what to do? Well, he gathered a few eager volunteers together and they all went into battle, armed with scouring pads and washing cream



^ Standard Split exhaust has been modified to run an extra pipe to vent the gases more efficiently. It's an old school mod, the likes of which could have been done back in the day

[no, we don't know what that is either, must be some Norweigan concoction!-Ed]. The result of that scouring brought the paint 'up' to the standard you see here. Obviously, no reasonable or sane individual would recommend attacking a car's paint with scouring pads and household cleaner, but Anders is certainly happy with the result.

When you see this rare treasure in the metal, it's easy to believe it might actually might have seen action as a rally car in the '50s, which were the golden years of the long-distance road rally in Europe, and the short-distance dirt rally in rural parts of the continent.

> "Alien had other plans for his shabby hermaphrodite"

It's especially believable when you look at all the bumps, dinks and scrapes on the body, the shabby sponsor logos, and those extra lamps, which actually came off a tractor on a nearby farm.

On the subject of the lights, they're all protected with mesh grilles to protect them from flying stones and debris from the gravelly Norweigan roads.
To blast any pedestrians who might wander in front of the car out of the way, there's a larger, external horn, also mounted to the bumper.

War zone

Inside, the first thing you'll notice is the stripped-out interior and the seats which, if you're into your military VWs, may look familiar. The story goes that after WWII, the remaining Schwimmwagens left behind by the Germans were gathered up by the Norwegian authorities and auctioned off in, amongst other places, Trondheim. Many of the redundant war machines were bought by local farmers, who put them to work on their land. It goes without saying that a number of crazy individuals even registered them for the road and, in the pursuit of a little more comfort, changed the seats. Thus, the originals became redundant, and it's easy to imagine that the ones that are now installed in Alien's Zwitter could well have been liberated from a Schimmwagen. They certainly have the right profile.

TECH INFO

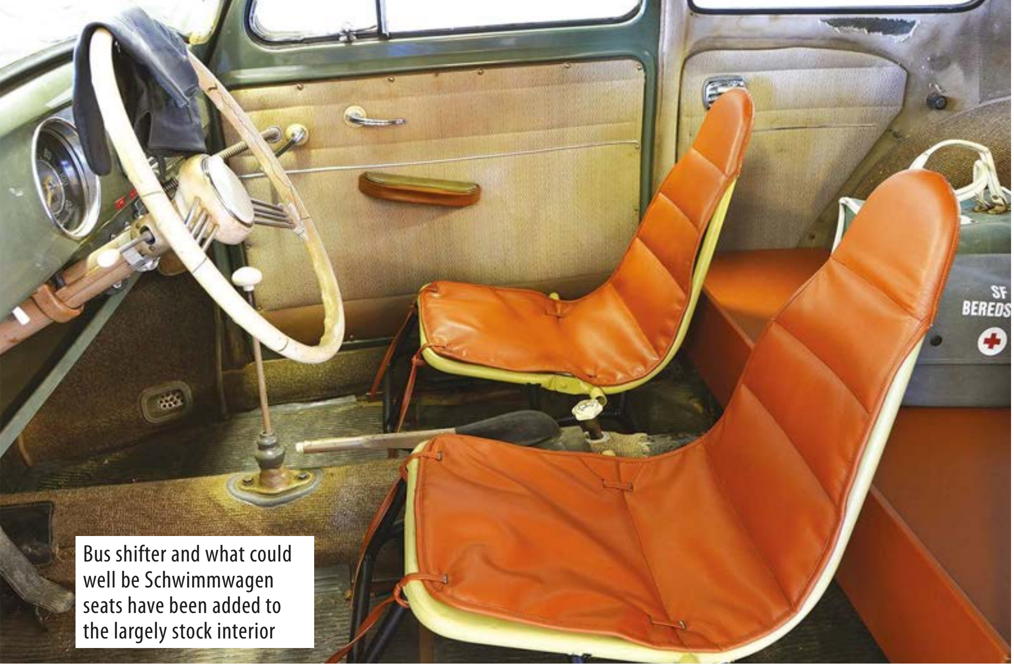
BODY: 1952 Zwitter, painted in 'Norwegian agricultural green'
INTERIOR: Original paint and headliner, with leather-covered Schwimmwagen front seats
ENGINE: 1192cc 30-horse '58 engine; RHM supercharger
GEARBOX: Stock 4-speed; non-synchro on first gear
BRAKES: Stock VW wide-5
WHEELS AND TYRES: Drilled stock steels painted red; Vredestein 165-15 Sprint Classics

A rally car is no place for passengers, so the rear seat was ditched in favour of a simple plywood shelf that is home to an emergency first aid kit and whatever else Anders feels like throwing on there when he takes the car out. At least the co-pilot has a matching seat to perch on, and a map light to aid navigating on night stages.

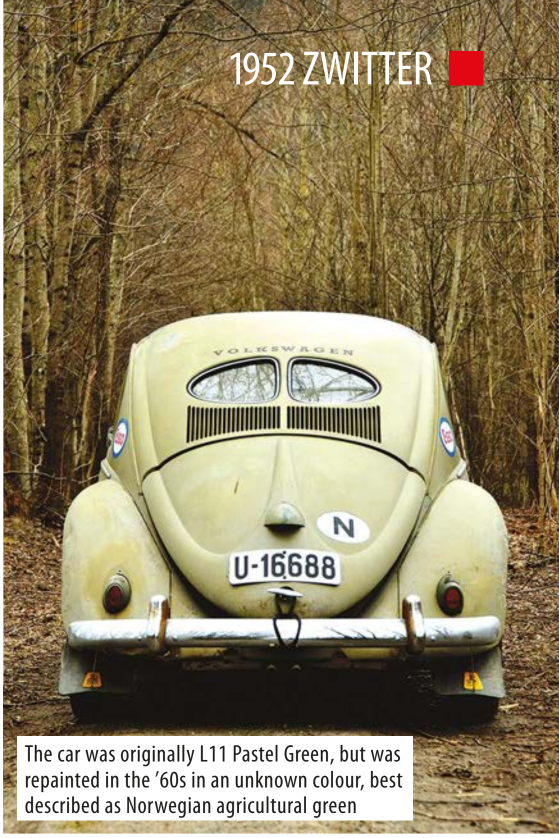
To avoid groping for gears and missing crucial shifts, the original gear stick has been switched for a longer one from a Split Bus. The Bus item now sits in Alien's eye line, which is clever in its simplicity.

A small brass plate, bearing the name Einar K. Schanke, was found in the glovebox, and it turns out he was the brother of one of the previous owners. They both lived in a small town by the name of Røros in Sør-Trøndelag, and you can almost imagine them driving the '52 along some of the dirtiest forest roads in Norway. Or perhaps it's a grizzly clue to some long unsolved crime, and maybe Mr. Schanke is actually burried out there deep in a Norwegian forest? Who knows…

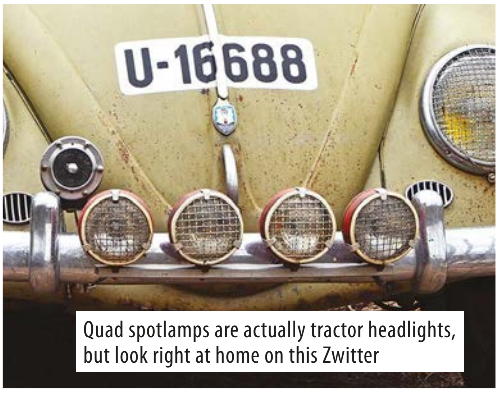
Whatever the fate of Einar K. Schanke, one thing we do know is that the original owner never used his Zwitter



Bus shifter and what could well be Schwimmwagen seats have been added to the largely stock interior



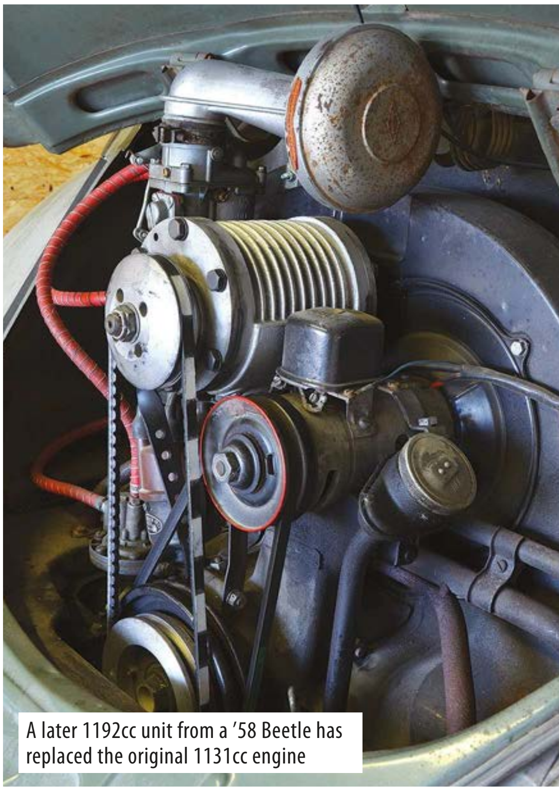
The car was originally L11 Pastel Green, but was repainted in the ’60s in an unknown colour, best described as Norwegian agricultural green



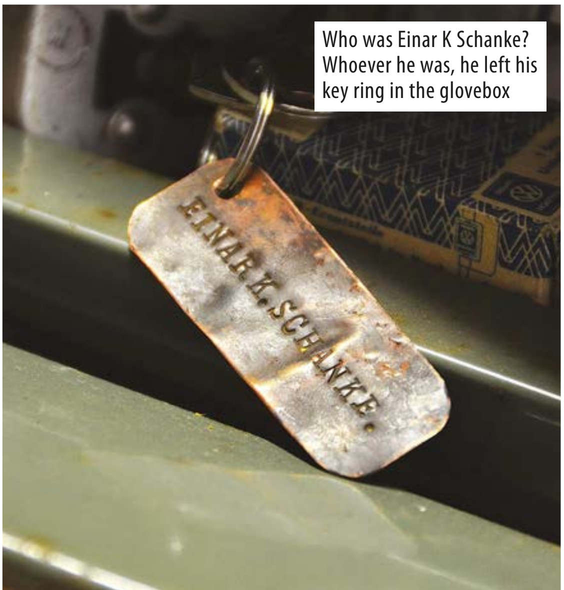
Quad spotlamps are actually tractor headlights, but look right at home on this Zwitter

Battle damage and patina all add to this Zwitter’s story. We love it

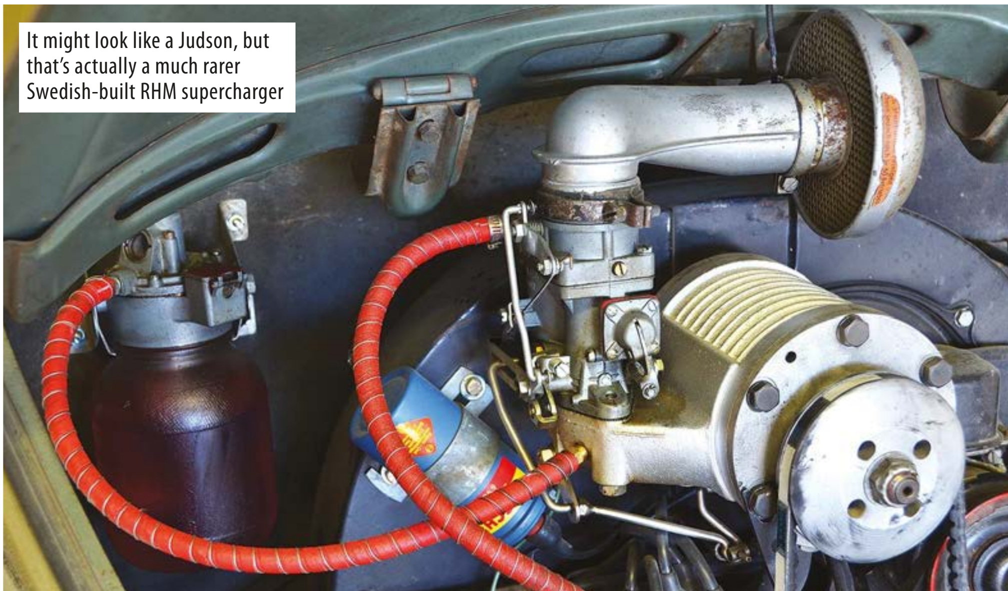
Original headliner might be a bit past its best but it all adds to the character



A later 1192cc unit from a ’58 Beetle has replaced the original 1131cc engine



Who was Einar K Schanke? Whoever he was, he left his key ring in the glovebox



It might look like a Judson, but that’s actually a much rarer Swedish-built RHM supercharger

This ’52 wears sponsor logos from Grendahl Auto, a VW retailer in mid-Norway that operated from the 1950s to the 1990s

for racing. He was the district doctor, living in the same village as the Schankes, and applied to the Norwegian authorities for permission to buy a car in 1952, at a time when such access was strictly limited. He was allowed because of his important occupation, and he bought the newest and most modern VW availiable. 1952 was the first year of heart-shaped tail lights, and the car came with synchromesh second, third and fourth gear. What progress!

Three is the magic number

Looking at the chassis and engine numbers, we find this is a very early Zwitter, having rolled off the production line in October 1952, the 895th one to be built to be exact. In the 62 years since, it has only been registered to three owners and appears to have been put into the garage some time in the 1970s.

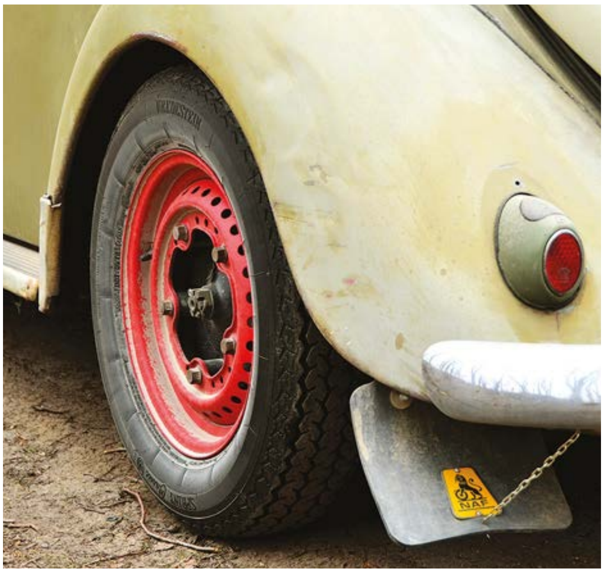
It was built with an 1131cc, 25bhp engine, but that’s been replaced with a later 30hp unit and a Swedish-made RHM supercharger (essentially a home market copy of the Judson). According to the advertising literature that accompanied it, the RHM increased the engine’s performance by up to 50%, but only when taken with a pinch of salt perhaps.

> “A grizzly clue to some long unsolved crime”

Alien got the car back on the road early last year and immediately took it to several Norwegian shows, including SCC (Scandinavia’s largest air-cooled VW event) where it won the prize for “The most outstanding car.” Since then, it’s also participated in the Petermax Müller Race to Hessisch Oldendorf in Germany and, by the time you read this, will have formed part of the Vintage Speed display at this year’s *VolksWorld* Show.

So, it looks as though Anders is making amends for all those years of the car sitting unsused. Better yet, it’s being used in anger, and not mollycoddled like the majority of these survivors. ■

Competing in last years Petermax Muller rally, Anders took Knut Ynge Willumsen along as co-pilot. The car performed well on the event and their 1,500km journey to Hessisch Oldendorf from Trondhem



The wheels are the original 15 x 4-inch steels that have been drilled to shed (minimal) weight and run a one-inch spacer on the rears to widen the track. Who says mudflaps are Naf?

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Two low to go

The last thing you'd expect a workshop manager for Mercedes to drive is an air-cooled VW, let alone this duo of 'Ratina' rides

Words and photos Jimbo Wallace

It's no secret that the Brasilia is a rare beast here in the UK. In recent times, memorable ones from our rain-drenched isle can be summarised using the digits of a single hand. But no matter where you're from, the Brasilia represents something rather special, thanks to the unique history that surrounds its development and production, which lasted from 1973 until 1982, and only in Brazil. As you're currently digesting this tome, you'll no doubt be aware of the Type 2/3 Detectives and Autostyl show cars that hit the scene a few years ago, but Simon Fernandez says they aren't the reason he decided to embark upon his own Brasilia adventure. In fact, he says he didn't necessarily want one at all, but that it was serendipity that lead to the arrival of his rare import, but we'll get to that in a minute.

Not content with owning just one cool ride, however, Simon also embarked upon a second project. One which, considering the swish surroundings we're currently inhabiting, comes as even more of a surprise. While his day-to-day exploits as workshop manager for a well known German luxury car brand might lead you to suspect he'd spend his spare time bombing around in a supercharged V8, rear-wheel drive monster, the reality couldn't be further from the truth.

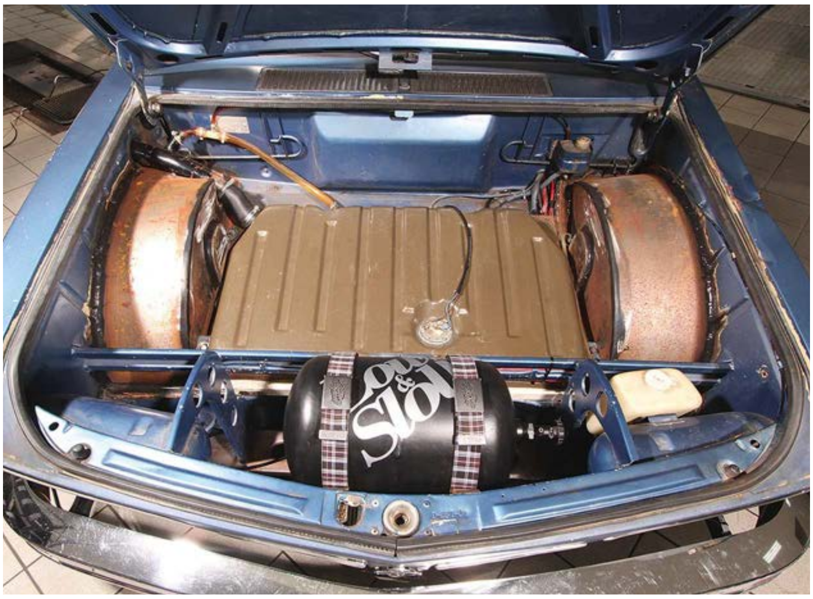
Simon admits none of his work colleagues really understand but VWs have just always been in his blood: "My eldest brother, Martin, was into the scene before we could even drive, and bought his first Beetle – a '67 – when he was just 16. He restored it (and a few times more since!), and, at 42 now, still owns it, as well as three other Beetles and a '67 Split Screen Camper.

"From the moment he first got his Beetle, I was hooked but, because neither of us could drive, our dad would take us to Bug Jam and the Pod," Simon recalls.

Design challenge

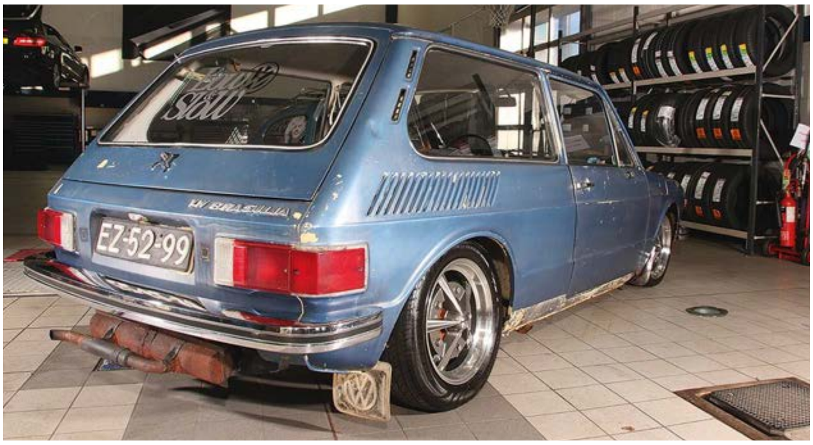
Spawned from a design challenge set by VW do Brazil's Chairman, Rudolf Leiding, exports of the Brasilia from the São Paulo factory were

Like the Beetle, interior trim is by VW. Bruised and battered is the name of the game in here



Tubbed front arches permit the use of a narrowed beam, and allow turning circle to be retained

Original tin VW mudflaps and replacement rear lights were both sourced from Brazil



Stock 1300 keeps on plodding on. Note the low Brasilia fan housing

said to have reached much of South America, as well as Portugal and Nigeria towards the end of the Brasilia's production life. Unsurprisingly, it's from Portugal, rather than further afield, that Simon's '76-vintage car originally hails. It was actually Simon's brother, who by this time had moved to Spain and established his own Low & Slow VW garage, who first bought the car to his brother's attention. "My brother's garage originally purchased two Brasilias from a scrapyard in Portugal and took them to Spain. They then sold one to a Spanish club member and I obtained the second. My bro was going to keep it himself, but modified cars in Spain now need to have every single modification noted on the vehicle's log book. This was not a option as it would have been a nightmare to get the car through the stringent checks, not to mention being financially unfeasible. All the better for me though," Simon regaled cheerfully.

Having prepared the car for him to a driving standard, Simon then set about repatriating it to Blighty.

"It didn't take much to put it back on the road to be fair as the sunny weather in Portugal had been kind to the underside, but it needed an engine, brakes and all of the suspension sourcing and fitting, not to mention the location of some exceptionally rare rear lights," Simon continues. If you think that all sounds like a nightmare on an obscure Brazilian-market only VW, console yourself with the fact that, unlike the visually similar Type 411 and 412 variants, the Brasilia is based almost entirely upon Beetle underpinnings. However, Simon did have to look to Brazil to track down those elusive tail lights.

Having seen the standard the T2/3D 'Kerbsnake' and Autostyl cars had set, Simon knew from the off he couldn't compete in terms of a full resto, so the decision was made to go 'Ratina', as he calls it.

A tale of two trailers

And so, with the car running and driving, the epic collection was undertaken. "I left home at 6.30am and journeyed to Stansted for a 10am flight to Santander. The flight arrived at noon where my brother had driven two hours to meet me, with the Brasilia on a trailer. He then took me straight to the docks where the ferry was leaving at 3pm for the UK. With no sleep, as the sea was very rough, we finally docked in Plymouth 24 hours later, where Simon Stockton, a good friend was ready to meet me with a trailer. We finally arrived home at 10pm. It was tiring, but worth it," beams Simon. That was around three years ago now and, as well as the drastic change in the ride height, there's now a stock 1300cc Beetle motor on board as it's all about reliability these days.

There's also been a strategic swap to a balljoint adjustable front beam, given a DIY four-inch narrowing job and fitted up with Beetle dropped spindles to tuck those 5 x 15-inch JGE Raders neatly within the arches. "With this set up though it was kissing the tarmac constantly so, over the last few months, it's turned into a rolling air ride project," Simon confesses. The tubbed front arches were fabbed by Gary from GM Autoworks, while the front and rear shock mounts have been raised for increased travel. Simon admits it's a suck it and see attempt, and that they are experiencing problems raising the back end more than about 4cm with

> "It needed an engine and brakes, and all of the suspension"

TECH INFO

BODY: 1976 Brasilia with some "crap emulsion" over the original cream paint
ENGINE: 1300cc flat four; Bosch 009 dizzy; pancake air filter; alternator upgrade; repaired original exhaust muffler
SUSPENSION: Homemade four-inch narrowed adjustable balljoint beam; 2.5-inch Beetle dropped spindles; tubbed front arches; raised shock mounts (still on torsion bars in pics but air ride system is now in place)
BRAKES: Standard drums front and rear
RIMS: 5 x 15 JGE Raders; 165/50 and 175/65 x 15s

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“I can’t stand it when people say ‘that’s a nice Squareback’”

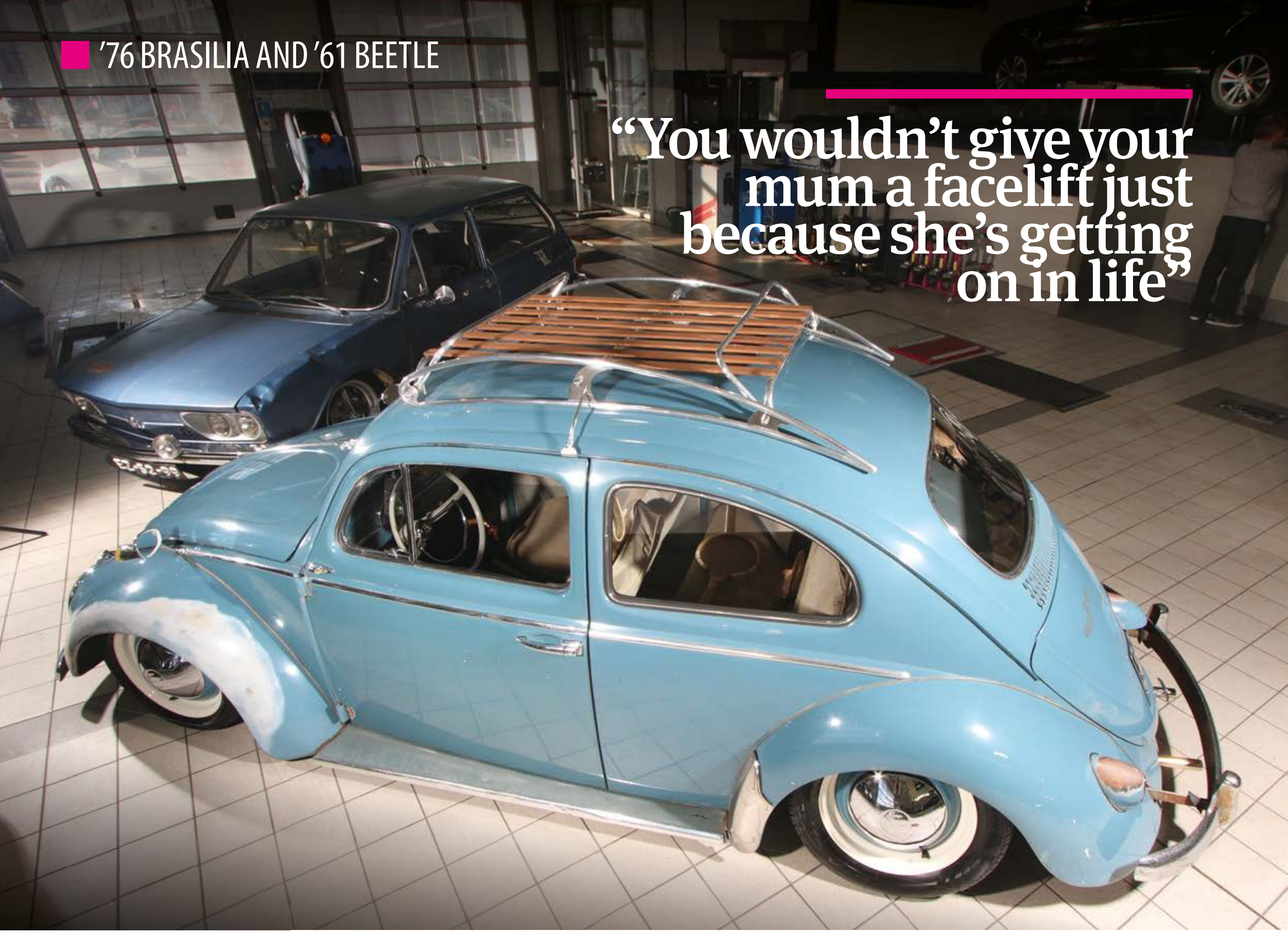
^ Shabby chic? Simon’s tried Mr. Muscle (other household cleaners are available) to get what he calls the ‘crap emulsion’ the car has been painted with off, but so far to no avail

> Dash is more early water-cooled than air-cooled, but the pedals and controls lok familiar. Funky Bart Simpson speedo and Hot Wheels Brasilia are the only changes

v Custom air tank was once part of his dealership’s air conditioning system, and is held in place with a brace of Vans checked belts

Low & Slow
VW BRASILIA

< With factions in France, Spain and two separate chapters in California, is it any wonder Simon’s commitment extends to some ink?



“You wouldn’t give your mum a facelift just because she’s getting on in life”

Local Arms Dealer

Just look at the trailing edge of the front wings. Close enough to the ground for you? Stylish Airstream roof rack is surely up there on the Trinket Pimp's top 10

No self-respecting 'Ratina' ride is complete without some manky ol' luggage under the bonnet

Simon pays homage to his late dad with that amazing walking stick gear knob

the air shocks curently fitted. “Once that’s sorted though, it’s all there and ready to go and will be going up and down on command.” He reckons the air set up stands him in at about £400 in parts so far, which includes re-purposing an old air con tank, front and rear air shocks, compressor, valves and all the fittings and air lines.

There was one other problem to overcome though, and that was registering the car for use in the UK. Initially, the DVLA refused to acknowledge that such a car ever existed, particularly as the engine had been changed too, but Simon finally got it ironed out by talking with the Portugese DVLA and the Spanish Classic Car Commission.

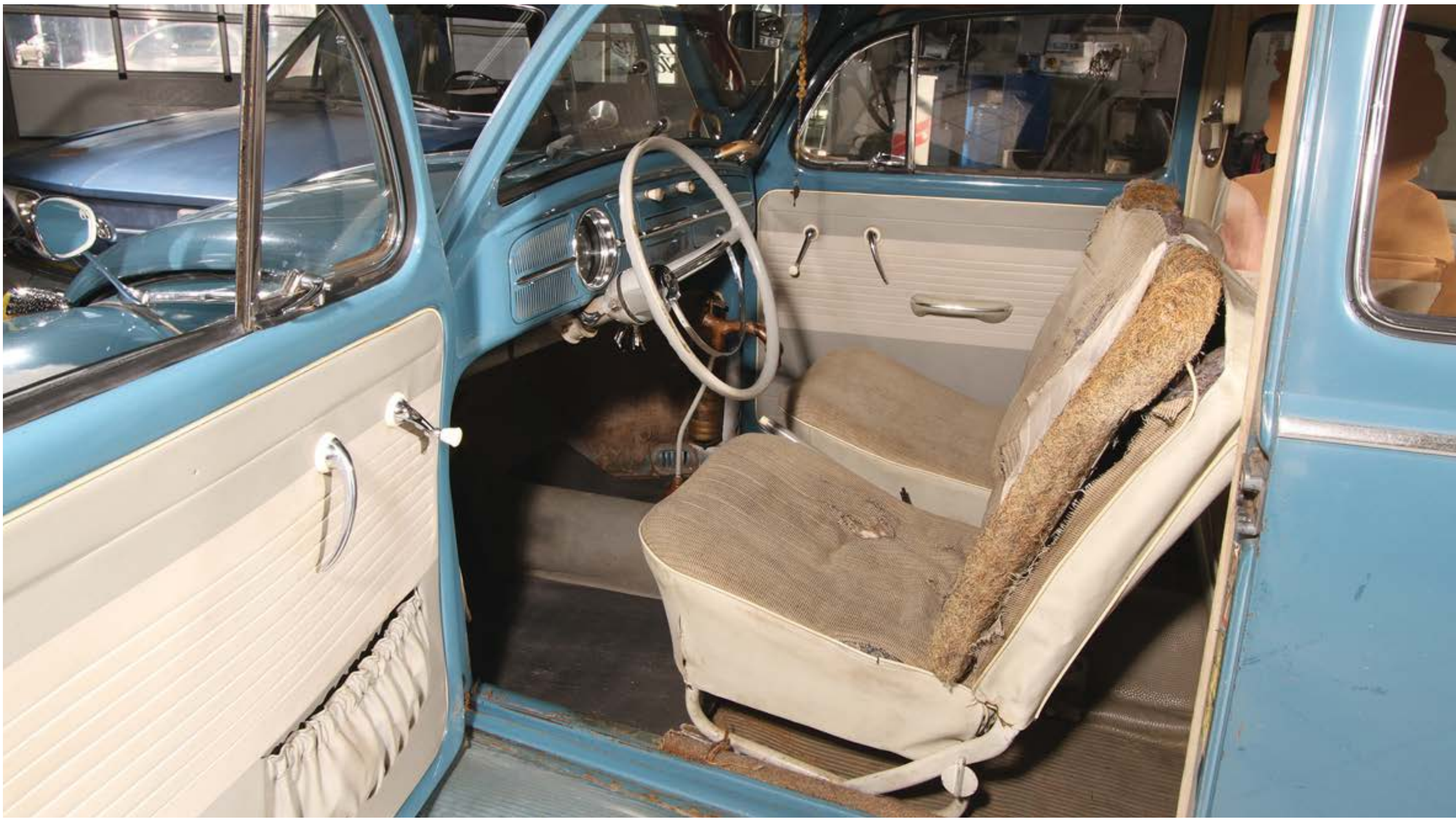
It seems it’s not just the DVLA that are confused either, as if there’s one thing in particular that really gets Simon’s goat, it’s the public: “I can’t stand it when people say, ‘That’s a nice Squareback, mate.’ Because they know it winds me up, it’s become a bit of a standing joke in the club. I guess that’s just the price you have to pay for driving something that’s this odd.”

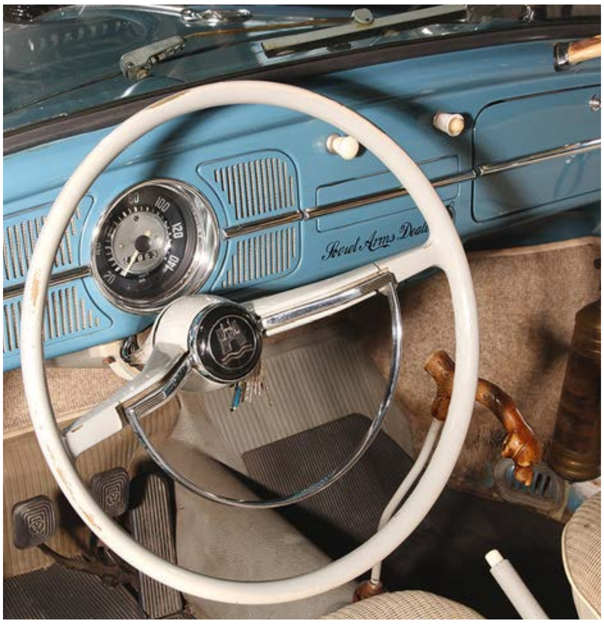
Boys on film

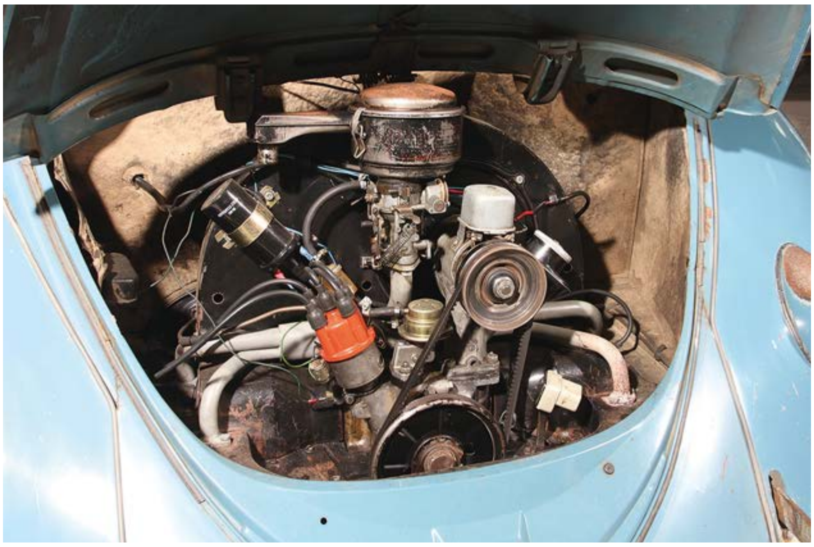
If you’ve seen the Stephen Brooks’ Vimeo film, *Low n’ Slow – a Beetle film*, you’ll already be aware of Simon’s ’61 Beetle. Though it’s the Brasilia that attracts the majority of the attention, Simon has actually owned his Bug longer, some five years now in total, and says he’s never felt the need to compromise the originality of that age-battered paintwork. As far as he’s aware, the car is completely original, apart from a repair to the a-pillar bottom on the driver’s side. “The guys at work

TECH INFO

BODY: Stock, 'Ratina'-style; original paint in L390 Gulf Blue; repro Albert swan-neck mirrors; Airstream roof rack
ENGINE: 1200cc flat four, 009 dizzy
GEARBOX: Standard four speed
SUSPENSION: Kraftwerk five-inch narrowed king and link pin beam with adjusters and dropped spindles; notched rear spring plates; two outer, one inner-spline drop; shorter, uprated gas shocks
BRAKES: Rebuilt stock 1200 drums all round
RIMS: Stock 4.5 x 15 steel wheels, 165/50 and 175/65 x 15-inch Continentals







^ 54 years of age and look at those door panels and sills. Even the floorpan is said to be in fantastic original condition, one of the many reasons Simon doesn’t want to drive the car any lower

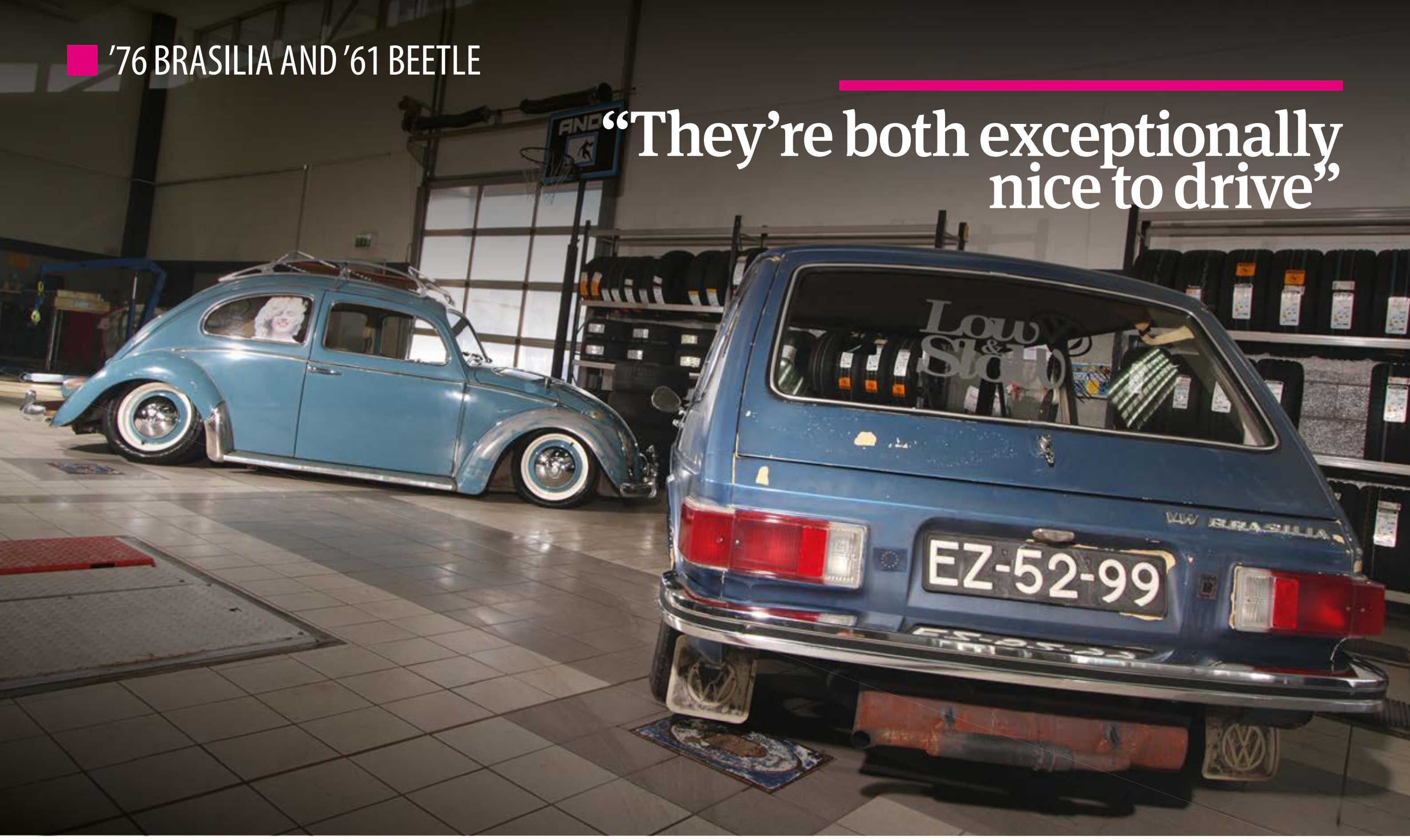
< Original paint dash is lovely, with just a hint of patina (the good stuff that is) on the steering wheel

⌄ Original 1200cc lump chucked a valve before *VolksWorld* 2012, but a full rebuild and an 009 dizzy helps devour the miles

still don’t understand why this car will never be painted, but you wouldn’t give your mum a facelift just because she’s getting on in life, would you?”

Even though the ‘state’ of it might suggest otherwise, there’s still countless hours invested in this car, but it’s the sense of provenance and history that really appealed to Simon. “When I was looking to buy a Beetle, I found a ’59 ragtop at VW Garden that was all original, but covered in red oxide paint. I agreed a price, which included some welding being done, but unfortunately it never transpired so, after six weeks, I took to the ’net again and found this one. There was already someone interested, so I had second dibs on it,” Simon told us. To his amazement, the buyer and seller were only £250 apart on price, but couldn’t agree, so he took the opportunity to nip to Staffordshire and have a look. It turned out to be exactly what he was looking for. “I later found out that the car was bought in by Kieft en Klok and had a ton of Swedish and UK paperwork to back it up. She looked as original as she does today, albeit a lot higher in ride height and duller in the paintwork, with an array of stickers covering the back window. I agreed a deal with the seller and bought her that day, with a loan from my mum,” Simon revealed. “There were a few concerns on the drive back, not least the fact that every time we hit a bump the steering wheel would turn of its own accord, but a swift nip up of the steering box sorting that little drama out.” This incident spurred Simon on to get in touch with a few local people around the Milton Keynes area where he lives, including Graham Wells, who he had previously been conversing with via Volkszone and, before they knew it, the UK chapter of Low & Slow was born.

“She’s set up for one as she eats cat’s eyes permanently two up”



"They're both exceptionally nice to drive"

"After I bought the car, my first project was to get her in the weeds. The front suspension was dropped to its lowest point on the adjusters and the rear arms were notched and dropped two splines. She rides like a dream now, but is set up for only one person as she eats cat's eyes permanently two up." That ride quality is thanks to a five-inch narrowed Kraftwerk beam that retains shock towers, and shorter, uprated Monroe gas shocks.

Gulf buffing

With the slamming side of things sorted, attention turned to 'detailing' and, contrary to popular belief, parts don't have to be shiny to warrant a good buffing. The old Gulf Blue paint on this car has been completely mopped to bring up the shine and that aerodynamic Airstream roof rack was sourced through Simon's brother. "It's stamped with 19 of 70, and to date I have never seen another genuine one in this country." Talking of unusual, the eagle eyed will have noticed the old walking stick topper grafted into place on the gear stick, a nod to Simon's late dad.

Seemingly though, this car is cursed when it comes to reaching The *VolksWorld* Show. Simon reckons it's only let him down on two occasions during his tenure, once when the electronic ignition packed up on the way to VooWoo 2012, the previous time when a burnt out valve the day before the 2011 show lead to a total engine stripdown and rebuild to standard specs. Further plans? "Who knows, but given the direction the Brasilia is taking, don't be surprised if you see some air appearing under those arches soon. The 'pans are so solid that I've had enough of scraping them around everywhere we go." We'll leave that final comment open to interpretation.

So far, the cost of both cars has been minimal as Simon says his fellow club members always pull together to help one another out with repairs and parts. And long may that continue.

Thanks: To all the helpful people who are always there with good advice, including Matt Balls, the DTA, the RSVP and all those who helped get the Brasilia back into the UK. ■

^ Next time you see these cars, the chances are both will be sporting air ride

> Like the famous Volkswagen advert said, "It's ugly, but it gets you there…"

BEHIND THE WHEELS

"They're both exceptionally nice to drive," says Simon. "I guess if I had to choose between the two, I'd always take the Beetle if I were on my own as it's that little bit more comfortable and magic carpet-like, considering how it sits, but with the family on board the Brasilia comes into its own. Neither of them will ever set the world alight with pace, but that doesn't bother me at all. If I wanted to go fast I sure as hell wouldn't be running them this low. And apart from that, my club mates would be up in arms if we had to change the name to Low & Fast! Like most things in life, they're a compromise but, because we're all limited to 55mph as a club, there's no way anyone gets left behind." ■

Low & Slow garage

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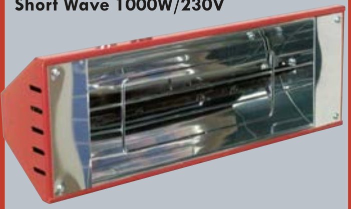

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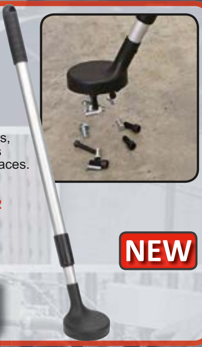

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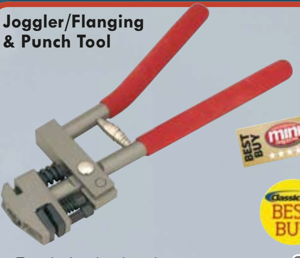

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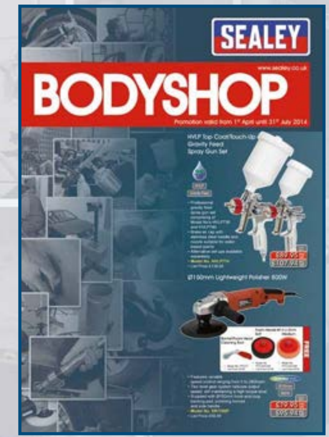

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If you're looking at this picture thinking, 'oh no, not another rusty patina Bus', think again, for this is definitely not just another rusty patina Split

Words Mike Pye **Photos** Stephen Hall

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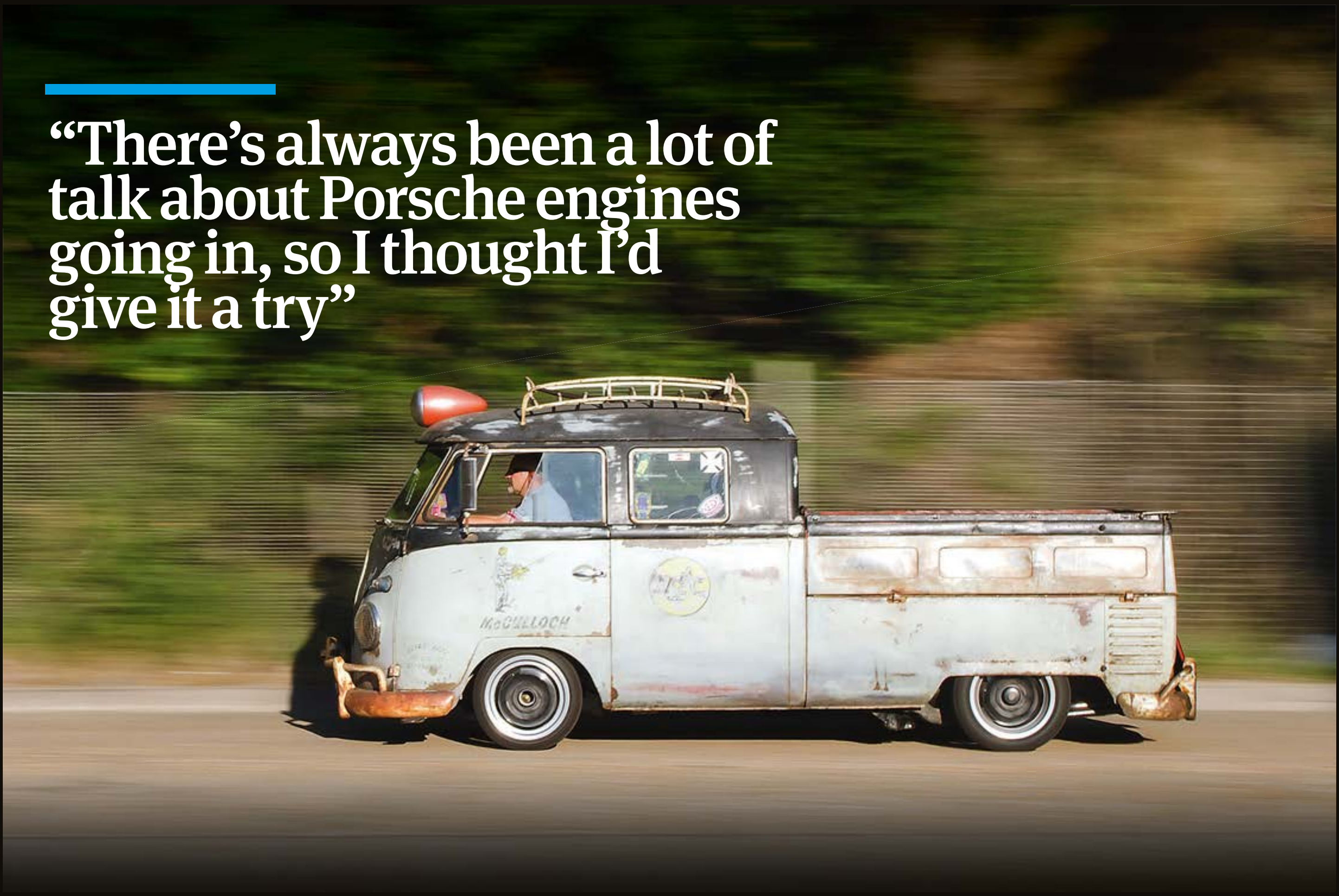
“There’s always been a lot of talk about Porsche engines going in, so I thought I’d give it a try”



You’ve all heard the bloke down the pub tell his mate – or better still, you – that a Porsche engine goes straight in a VW. Oh, how we laugh. And for most people that’s where it ends, as a conversation with an ill-informed buffoon down the pub.

But Jim Marticcio wasn’t content to leave it there. “I ran the Bus around with a 1600 in it for a few years, and got bored with it. There’s always been a lot of talk about Porsche engines going in, so I thought I’d give it a try,” he says with the air of someone who’s both capable and, at the same time, extremely modest about what he has achieved. But where many before have ventured down the Porsche route and ended up tangled in a web of expensive German engineering, Jim took an altogether more sensible route. “I hunted around for a complete car on eBay, figuring that was the best way to go about it. It had to be air-cooled, of course – I mean, if it’s not air-cooled, it’s not a Volkswagen, right? – and it had to be an up and running, taxed and MoT’d car. My thinking was if I could drive it round for a while first, I could check everything worked before taking it apart.”

Carrera connection

When a late ’89 964 Carrera 2 appeared for around £6.5k, when most were selling for £12-13k, Jim made his move. Pressed into immediate service as his daily driver, Jim got to know the car and also spent a lot of evenings in the garage with his tape measure. “I was surprised to find a lot of things were very similar. The wheelbase wasn’t that different [2272mm for the Porsche vs 2400mm for the Bus], the track wasn’t that far apart [1356 / 1360mm for the Bus vs 1374 / 1379mm for the Porsche] and it all looked like it could be made to fit,” explains Jim. The important word in that sentence is ‘all’, for Jim had no intention of just doing an engine swap, he wanted the whole shooting match under his Bus. “I wanted to keep everything Porsche, for ease of parts and maintenance, and because that’s how it was designed in the first place.” So while this might look like a Volkswagen Bus, it’s actually more Porsche than it is VW, with everything from the front anti-roll bar through to the fan belt being transplanted from the donor 964. Hell, even the wiring loom, with all its sensors, relays and connectors has upped and moved house. It’ll come as no surprise to hear that the latter part of the operation caused the biggest headache, but we’ll come back to that later. We’ll start where Jim started, with the engine and gearbox. “I began by fabricating a subframe for the engine, gearbox and rear suspension so I could wheel that into place and set the rear wheels where I wanted them in the arches. I didn’t have to do any modifications to the bodywork, other than cut a little bit of the rear inner arches away and remove the rear valance, but I added a hell of a lot of 2 x 1-inch box section steel between the floor and the chassis to rigid it all up and strengthen it. I then boxed the whole of the chassis as well.”

Happy it all fitted, Jim made a simple jig to ensure it all went in square and welded the rear subframe into place. He then turned his attention to the front suspension. “I’d spend weeks not doing anything at all, just working out *how* I was going to do something. That’s where the time goes. But if you look at things logically, eventually you can work it out, then go from there.” There’s a lot of truth in that but, I don’t know about you, I could sit and look at a Porsche wiring loom until all my hair falls out – no witty comments thank you – and I’d still be none the wiser. Intrigued by Jim’s apparent ease at doing what I think it’s fair to say is probably beyond the realms of most qualified mechanics, I

TECH INFO

BODY: 1960 Split Screen Double Cab
ENGINE: 3.6-litre M64 Porsche flat six; Carrera Cup exhaust
GEARBOX: G50 5-speed
BRAKES: Porsche 964 power-assisted vented discs and four-pot calipers all round; 964 master cylinder
WHEELS AND TYRES: 5.5 and 6 x 15 ATS cookie cutters; Bridgestone 185/55-15 and 195/65-15s
SUSPENSION: Porsche 964 – the whole kit and caboodle

^ Running his own haulage company, a VW Commercial was the natural choice for Jim. It’s just he found the old 1600 motor the Bus came with to be a bit slow…

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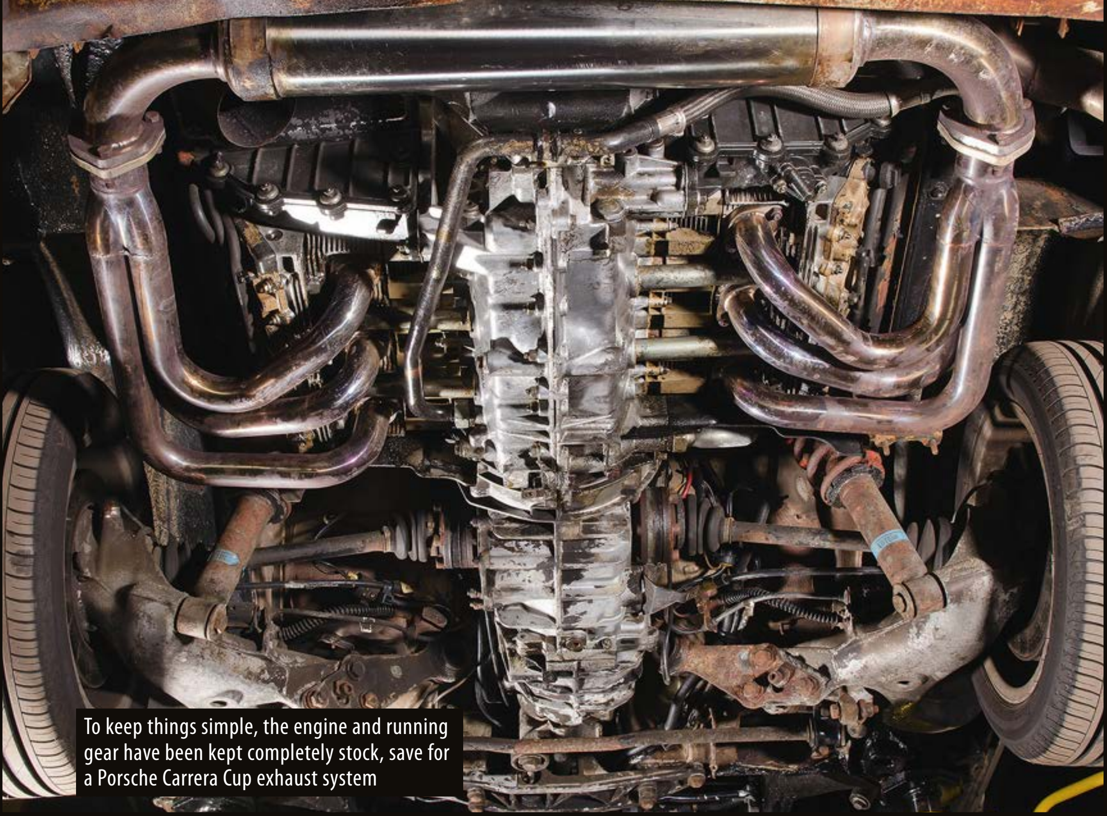
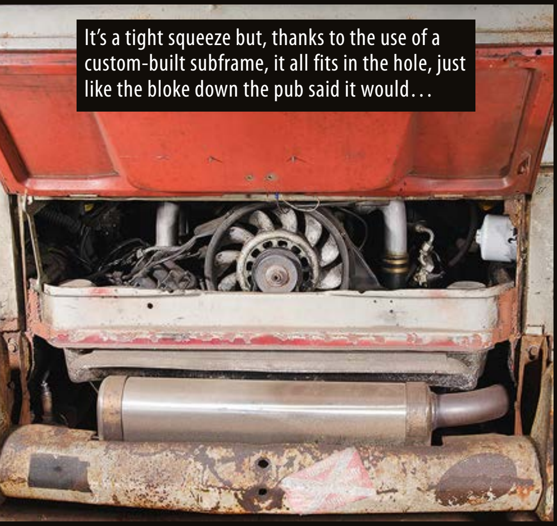


To keep things simple, the engine and running gear have been kept completely stock, save for a Porsche Carrera Cup exhaust system

Porsche oil cooler sits behind what's left of the intake louvres on the offside rear corner

Monza-style alloy fuel filler is in the rear bed, connected to a custom made ali tank

Even the factory filler for the power steering reservoir has been transplanted into the Bus



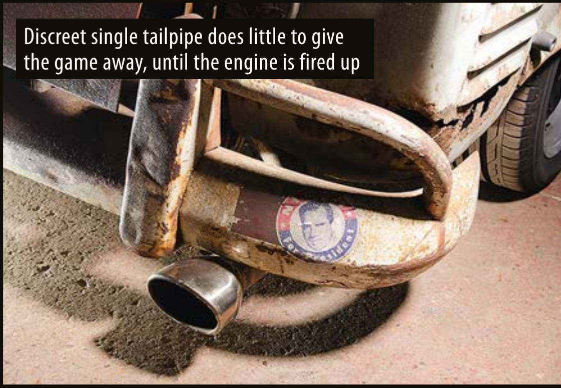
It's a tight squeeze but, thanks to the use of a custom-built subframe, it all fits in the hole, just like the bloke down the pub said it would…

Using the Porsche wiring loom means all the clocks and warning lights work as they should

THE ENGINE

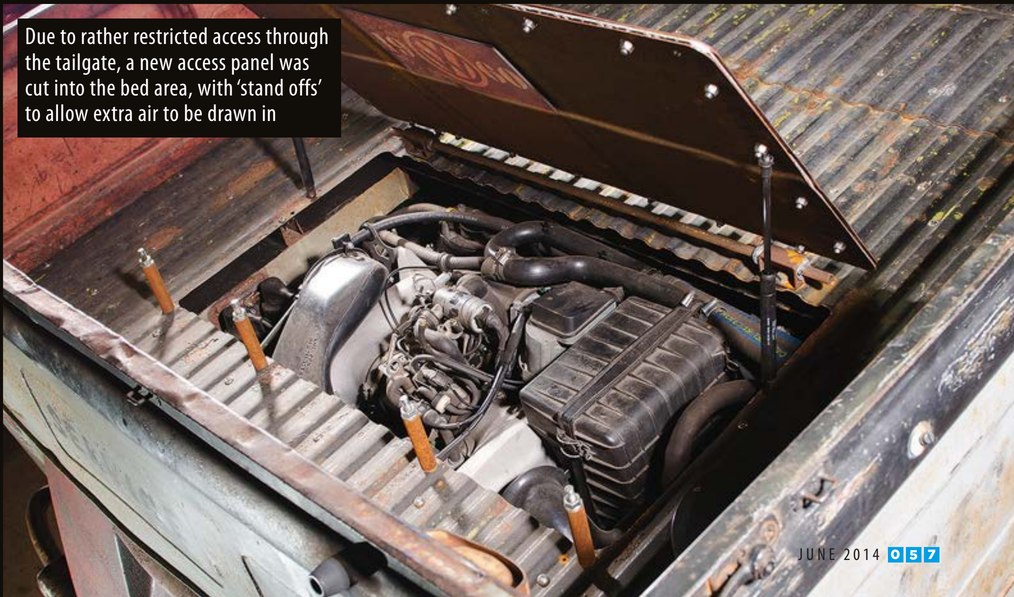
Though the new-for-1989 Porsche 964 clearly shared ancestry with the 911, in reality the all-new, jelly-mould car was a whole different animal. Crucially, it was the first of the 911 dynasty not to use torsion bar rear suspension. The Getrag G50 five-speed gearbox was retained from the '87-on 3.2-litre Carrera, and the engine, designated M64, was punched out to 3.6-litres using 100mm pistons on a 76.4mm crank, but remained a naturally-aspirated, air-cooled flat six. With Bosch DME fuel injection, it produced 247bhp at 6,100rpm and 229ft. lbs of torque at 4,800 rpm and, in a svelte, 1350kg Porsche, could hit 0-60mph in 5.7 seconds and topped out at 162mph.

Put all that running gear in a Split Screen Bus with the frontal area of, well, a barn door, and you can certainly knock a few points off the top speed, though the grin factor makes up for that. "I don't race it, I drive it normally," says Jim, with a twinkle in his eye. "My boy racer days are over, but there's still nothing better than being in the outside lane of the motorway and having people think, 'What the hell..? Why is he overtaking me?'" ■

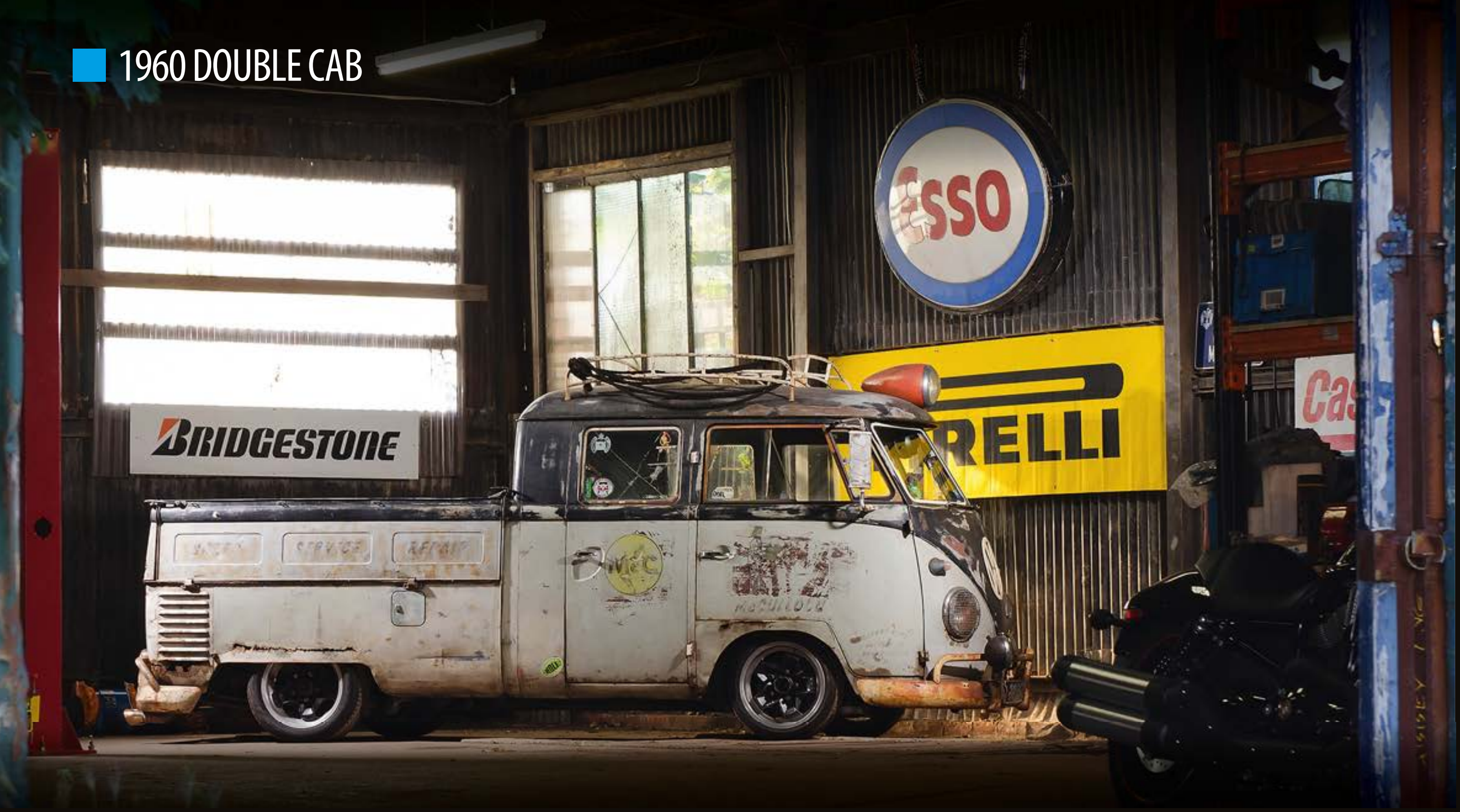


Discreet single tailpipe does little to give the game away, until the engine is fired up

Porsche-spec VDO gauges are like a factory upgrade for a hot VW



Due to rather restricted access through the tailgate, a new access panel was cut into the bed area, with 'stand offs' to allow extra air to be drawn in



asked about his background. "I went into the motor industry after school, working on trucks. I did a few cars – rebuilt engines, the sort of thing you do when you're 17 – and a full apprenticeship, so I knew the ins and outs of cars. After that though, I started my own haulage business and just fiddled with cars in my spare time," he says modestly.

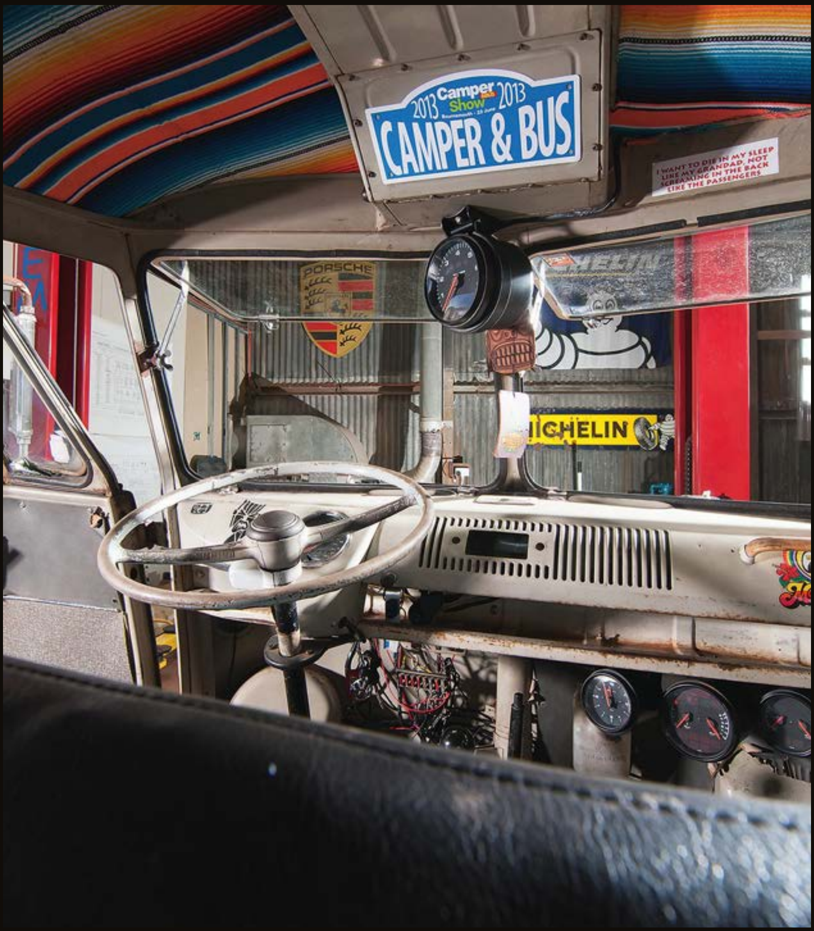
Clever as Jim clearly is, he did concede that having worked out how he was going to do the front suspension / steering swap, he chose to hand it over to someone else to carry out. "The steering needed narrowing by a couple of inches, and I didn't want to get that wrong, so I spoke to Andy Robinson [Andy Robinson Race Cars, near Basingstoke, Hants] and he was up for the challenge..." At this point Jim's wife, Tania, interjects: "They laughed when they first saw the Bus, but once they'd seen the engine in the back I think they were quite impressed." ARRC picked up where Jim had left off and modified the existing chassis to suit the Porsche dimensions, then fabricated new crossmembers and strut towers and installed the entire front suspension assembly with its power-assisted steering rack, which now uses a Type 25 transfer box to mate up to the original Split column, and lengthened the Porsche gear shift linkage to suit the Bus. "He made sure the front and rear ends were perfectly aligned and set up the camber, caster and toe for me. That was important as there's nothing worse than a car crabbing down the road. I'm really pleased with what he did, he made an excellent job of it," reports Jim.

^ If you like your Buses scraping tarmac you'll probably think this Bus needs lowering. Jim, however, prefers his Buses safe and driveable. At speeds far in excess of those they were built for

Fine tuning

And what about the ride height? I asked, how did you set that? "I put the rear end where I wanted it before I made the subframe," explains Jim, "and Andy then mounted all the front suspension to match. It's on adjustable coilovers all round so it can be fine tuned from there, but I'm happy with it as it sits, and I can drive it anywhere."

Working out how to package all the ancillary parts necessary to make the Porsche running gear work as it should took up a few more of Jim's evenings, but the 964's oil cooler now sits behind the offside rear louvres, its ECU behind the nearside ones and the oil tank in the offside front wheelarch. However, the one vital part that couldn't easily be swapped over was the formed poly fuel tank, so Jim had a 90-litre aluminium tank made, but used the Porsche header tank and carbon can and had new high pressure fuel lines made up by Pirtek to suit. "They were the best part of £500, just for those. They're the sort of bits you don't factor in when you're planning something like this, but you have to have them to do the job properly."



That just left the small matter of the wiring, which, as you will have gathered by now, is by Porsche, not VW (with the exception of the original lighting circuit, which has been integrated into the 964 loom). Jim: "I blew up all the Porsche wiring diagrams to 4 x 3ft and stuck them on the wall, then a friend of mine called Mark gave up four whole weekends to go through the old loom, stripping out all the bits we didn't need – power windows, electric seats,

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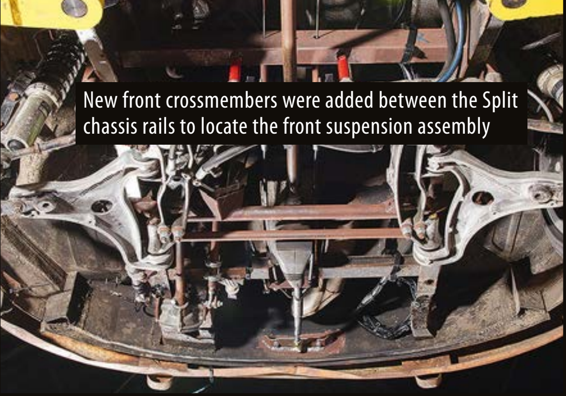
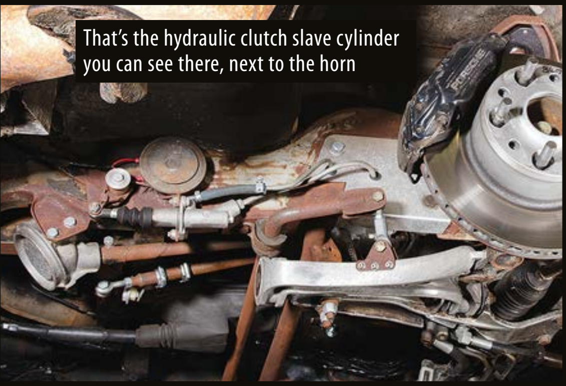
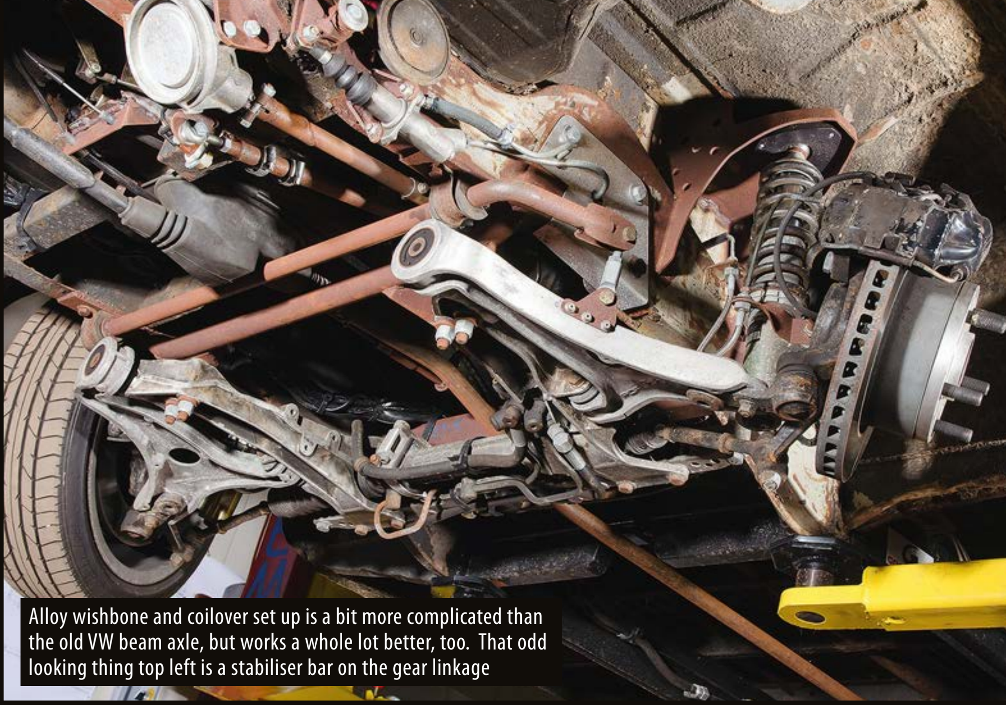
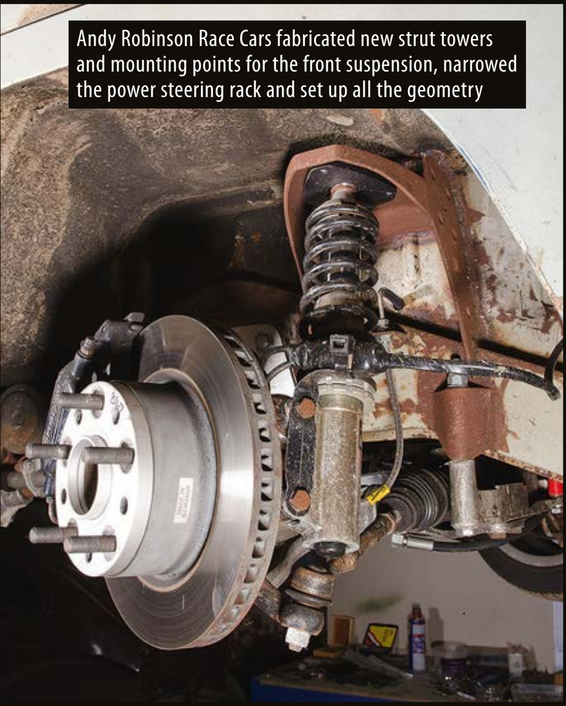
^ The Mexican blanket seat cover thing has been done to death, but a headliner in the cheery cloth is a nice touch


New front crossmembers were added between the Split chassis rails to locate the front suspension assembly

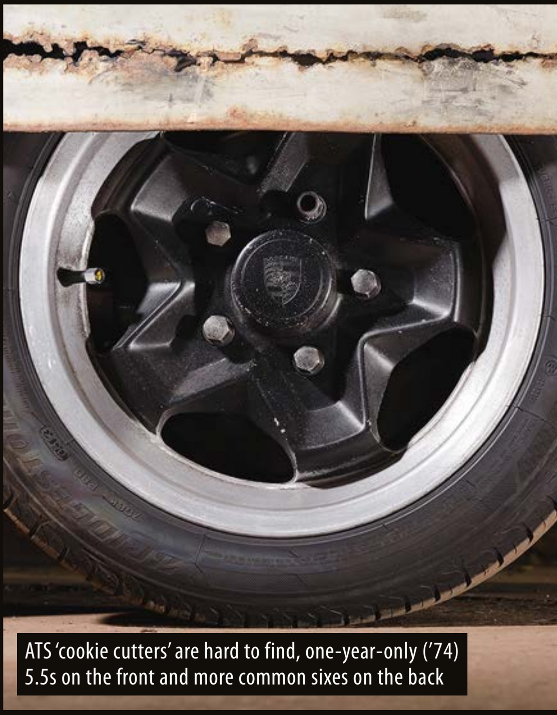

That's the hydraulic clutch slave cylinder you can see there, next to the horn

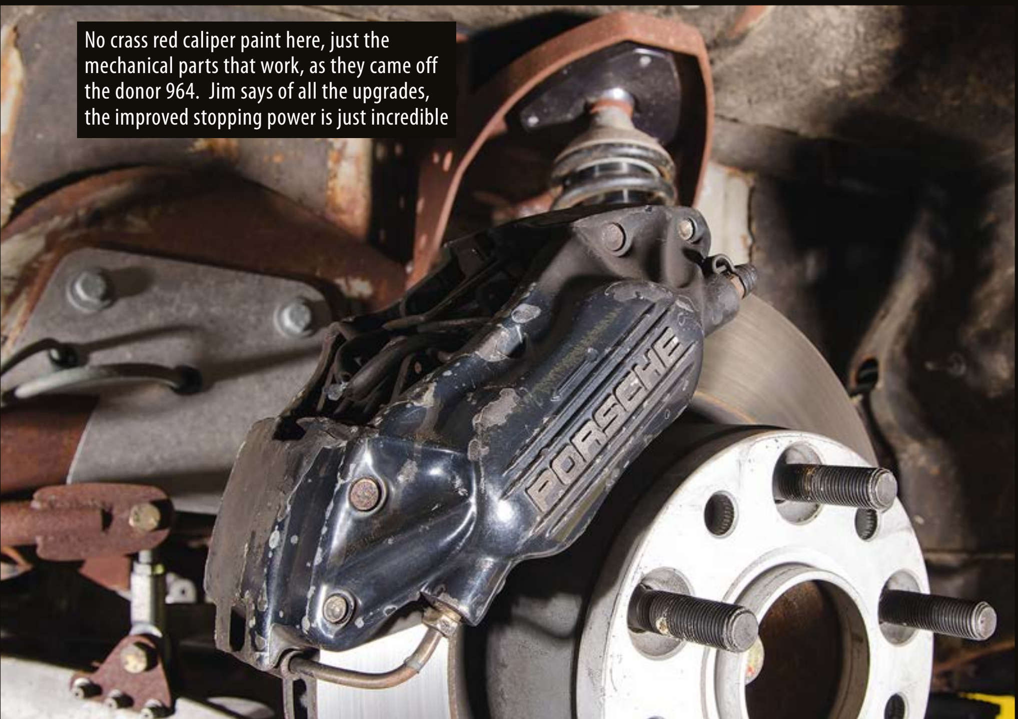

Alloy wishbone and coilover set up is a bit more complicated than the old VW beam axle, but works a whole lot better, too. That odd looking thing top left is a stabiliser bar on the gear linkage

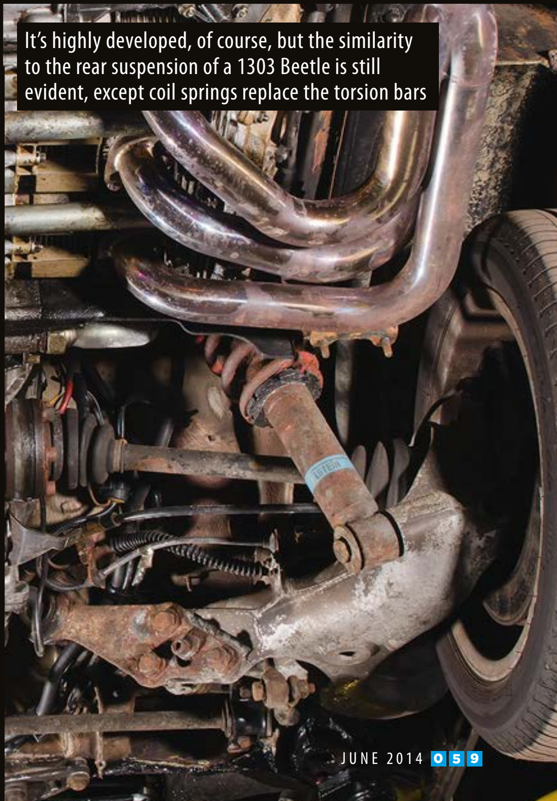

Andy Robinson Race Cars fabricated new strut towers and mounting points for the front suspension, narrowed the power steering rack and set up all the geometry

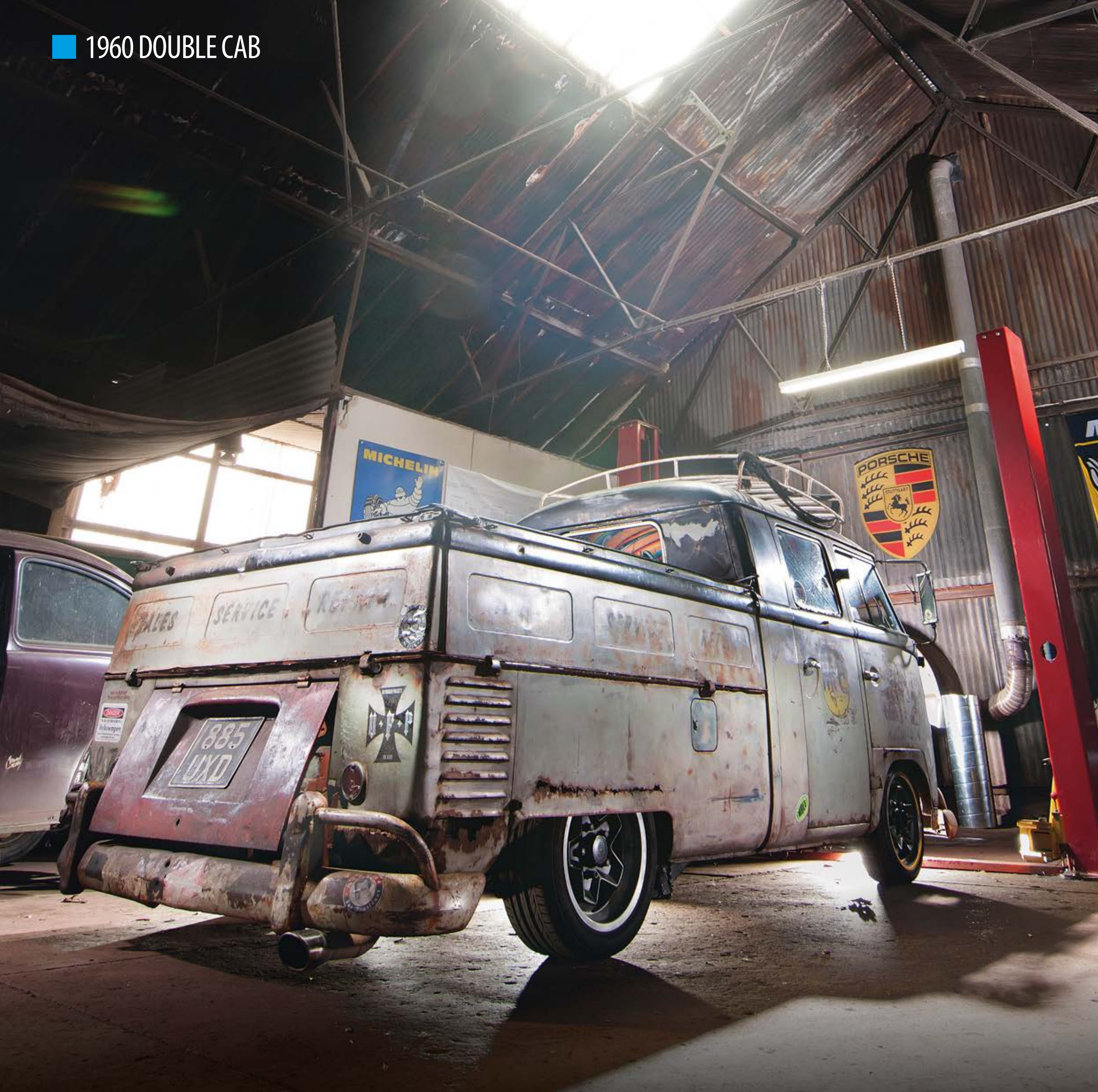
BEHIND THE WHEEL

"She drives so nice compared to the old Bus that wandered all over the place at 50mph, it's almost like driving a modern car. The only real difference to the Porsche is that the Bus is so flat fronted so the aerodynamics aren't anywhere near as good, and you certainly notice that," Jim laughs. "It's definitely not a sports car, even though it gives you the feeling that it goes like one. Your knees are six inches away from the front of the vehicle, so you have to look a long way ahead and drive sensibly, but it's nice to have the power there if you need it. And to have some proper brakes that stop you immediately from whatever speed, without skidding, so you're always under control under braking, too. I guess the best way to describe it is a good drive, with good road feel." ■


ATS 'cookie cutters' are hard to find, one-year-only ('74) 5.5s on the front and more common sixes on the back


No crass red caliper paint here, just the mechanical parts that work, as they came off the donor 964. Jim says of all the upgrades, the improved stopping power is just incredible


It's highly developed, of course, but the similarity to the rear suspension of a 1303 Beetle is still evident, except coil springs replace the torsion bars



Remember that scene from *The Blues Brothers*, when Jake does the flick flacks down the aisle of the church, proclaiming to Elwood, "I have seen the light!"?

air conditioning, stuff like that – and lengthening bits where necessary. I wanted it all Porsche, so everything that needs to be there is there." As well as the necessary engine management, that even includes such as the pad sensors on the disc brakes, the anti-lock braking system and all the warning lights in the re-homed gauges. "The test was when we connected the battery and turned the key and it fired up first time. That was absolutely amazing."

And with that, Jim was out on the road for a test drive. That test drive has never really ended though, which is why all that fresh steel Andy Robinson welded in now has a light dusting of surface rust over it, and why you'll never see Jim displaying this Bus with the wheels off, or lying on his back polishing the bolts underneath. "This is how it is. I'll never sell it, I love it," he says with a grin. "I spent three years of weekends building it and now I just like driving it. A lot of people don't get it, but the point was to keep it looking all original, not restored. That's how we like it. Well, how I like it, my wife doesn't. We've got a 13-window Deluxe as well though, and Tania wants that as a Camper, so we'll do that as a nicely restored one. Though I've got a Subaru for track days and I'm toying with using that engine, and maybe going four-wheel drive as well..."

"I spent three years of weekends building it, and now just like driving it"

There are other vehicles in the Marticcio armoury as well, mostly but not entirely VWs, and you can bet there's something 'different' about all of them. "That's why I find the VW scene interesting. There aren't too many purists telling you you've got the wrong radiator clip, it's just nice, friendly people. But the cars I'm interested in are the ones people have done something different with, that's what it's all about for me." Amen to that. ■

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Back in the Red

After 17 years away from the scene, Gary Brent came back stronger than ever with his entirely DIY Resto Cal '66

Words Gordie Woollacott **Photos** James Wallace

SMOKE
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Gary Brent has completed a restoration that was governed as much by the weather as his own motivation. Performing a body-off restoration on your driveway is one thing, performing it in the North East of England is quite another! Just think about that for a moment. There are certain little luxuries that those working under any sort of cover might take for granted. Things such as being able to leave your tools strewn wherever they lay, not having to worry about wind or rain and the small detail of security. Through it all, though, Gary's enthusiasm was never beaten out of him, and that's the winning ingredient right there. Sure, the motivation waned at times, but the enthusiasm and the desire to get his car looking exactly how he wanted always kept him going.

The journey begins in 1992, when a 19-year-old Gary paid £300 for his first Beetle, a '74 that he rescued from a local scrapyard. Gary: "I was influenced by friends who were into VWs and, when I started going along to shows with them, it was inevitable I'd end up with one of my own." That car has long since moved on, but 17 years later, Gary was feeling the need to own another Beetle. "After searching around for a new project, I found this '66 on pre67vw.com for the princely sum of £900. This was in September 2008, and the car was in Warwickshire. So, with the help of my friend Scott and his ex-AA T4, we trailered it back to Whitley Bay."

But why, after so many years away, did he feel the need for another Beetle in his life? Gary: "My missus, Claire, and I were just plodding through life doing what we wanted to do, when in March 2005 I was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Receiving news like that certainly makes you re-evaluate life." It took six months of chemo and one month of radiotherapy before Gary was back on the road to recovery. "After that, I started thinking I need to be ticking things off my bucket list." High on

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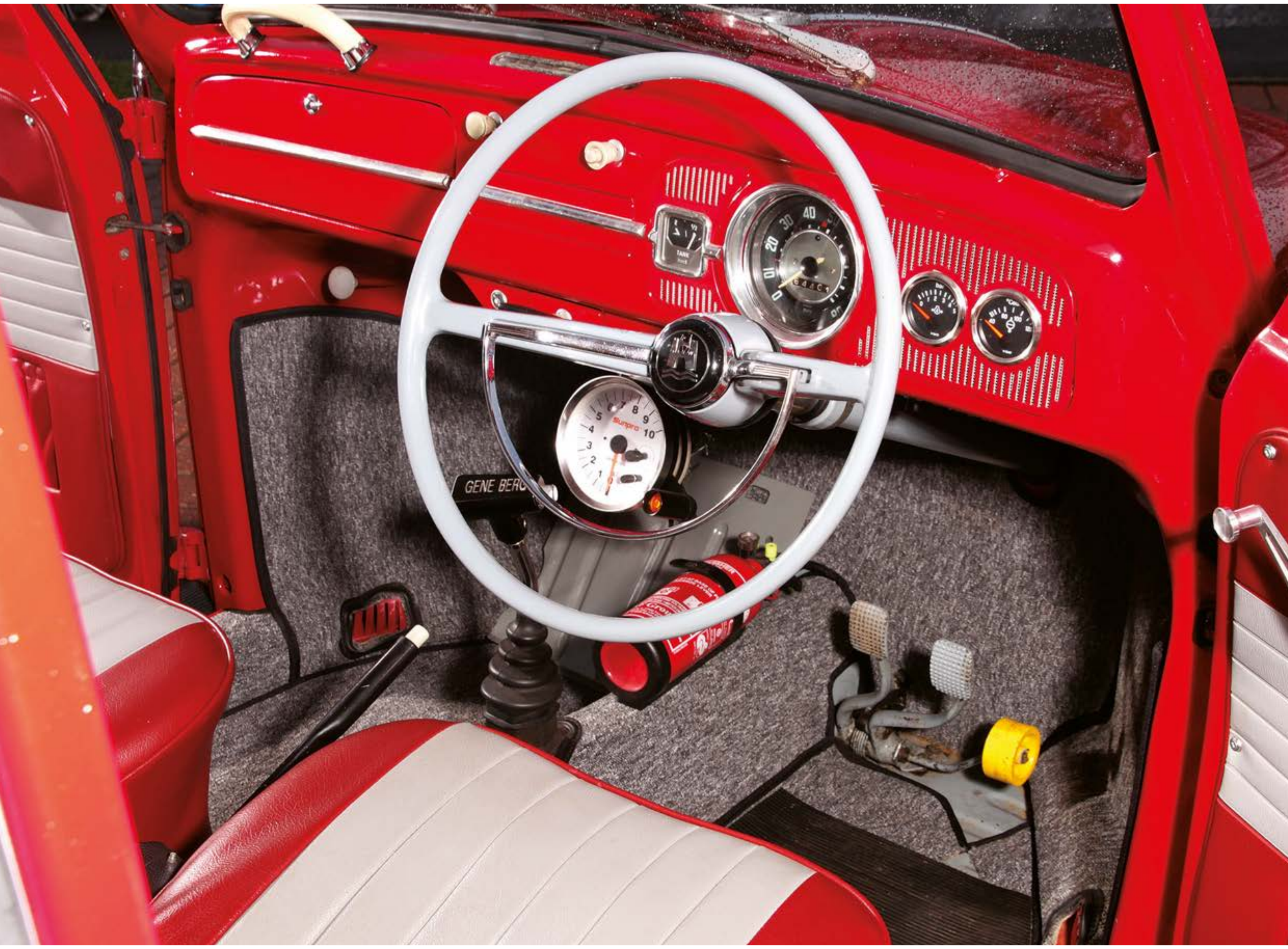
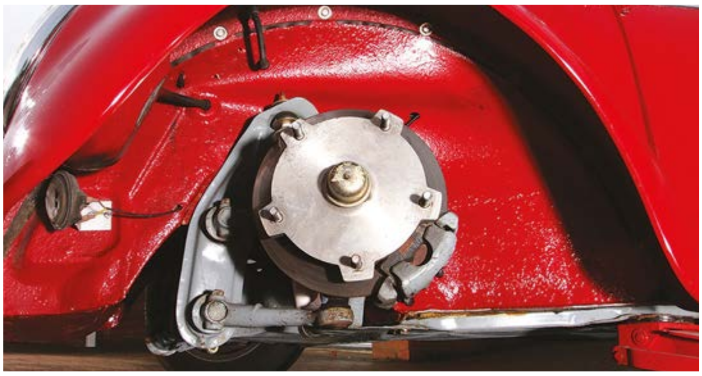


Gary ditched the standard '66 organ-style throttle pedal so he could run a skateboard wheel instead, the way we all used to do!

Everyone loves a pinstriped helmet, and Gary's had his done to match his car



CB wide-5 disc brake kit improves stopping power as much as the four-inch narrowed beam ruins the turning circle

Carpets came from Spirit of the 50's, whilst the new seat covers came from German eBay with a Taiwanese air freight bill!

Sunpro
GENE BERG

More Cal Look than Resto Cal, but the extra gauges and Berg shifter are worthy additions to the interior all the same

the list was a trip to California. So, whilst Claire headed to Peru with her friend, Gary and Scott spent two weeks touring hot rod shops on the West Coast. "We went to Boyd Coddington's, West Coast Choppers, So-Cal Speed Shop, you name it. We also hit as many car shows as we could fit in." After that, Gary didn't need much more inspiration and began planning for his new project as soon as he was home.

He originally thought six months would see it done, but, on further investigation, it was clear it was going to take a lot longer. "As with any resto, there was quite a bit more to do than I first thought. The six-month deadline I'd set myself was nowhere near realistic," Gary recalls. In the end, it took two years.

In that time, Gary's self-taught welding skills were certainly put to the test. "I joined the RAF as a vehicle mechanic when I was 16-years old and straight from school. I was always messing around with cars so it made sense. I picked up a welder and just went from there." It wasn't until a few years later that he took a formal, six month evening college course, resulting in a welding SQA (Scottish Qualification Authority). If you're thinking the equipment gathering dust in your garage is not up to a resto of this level, fear not. The whole thing was completed using an affordable SIP Migmate 130 turbo, and with a little help from some air. "Originally, I had a little 50-litre compressor I picked up cheap from Aldi. It was nowhere near up to the job. Eventually, I got lucky and bought a 110-litre, 2hp unit from a fellow club member for a song."

Gary systematically went through the car from front to back. Nothing was left untouched and the body essentially had the bottom six inches cut out and replaced.

It didn't all go back together stock either. To ease future servicing work, he incorporated a removable valance and clearanced the front inner wings, in readiness for a four-inch narrowed beam and CB dropped spindles.

Around this point, replacement wings from Day Mouldings arrived. "I fitted them up almost straight away, just to give the illusion that I was further on than I actually was."

With the body looking better, it then parted company with the floor, meaning the project now occupied not only the driveway but also the front garden. You can bet your bottom dollar Gary has a very understanding wife, or a very large wine cellar!

TECH INFO

ENGINE: 1641cc built by owner; full-flow oiling; Dave Downes-machined case; Scat 25 camshaft; MSD ignition; twin Weber 36IDF carbs with CB manifolds, set up by Jay at Bug Shop
SUSPENSION: 4-inch narrowed beam; CB dropped spindles; turned one spline on rear; EMPI front shocks; KYB rear shocks
BRAKES: CB wide 5 front disc brake kit, stock rear drums
RIMS: 5.5 x 15-inch American Eagles; Firestone 145s front, BF Goodridge 205/70s rear

Laser's edge

"Once the body was off, I was able to remove the rotten floorpans. With them gone, I found the Napoleon's hat and framehead both needed replacing, too. Cutting the old one out was the hardest part of the entire job. I used a laser level to help ensure a straight cut line as there's no margin for error with that job!"

There then followed a momentous moment. With the body off and the floorpan stripped to the spine, it all finally fitted in Gary's garage! "I celebrated that by taking the whole thing back to bare metal. I even found the original date stamp – 23.3.66."

From this point, things really begin to pick up pace. "I'd set myself a target of showing the car at a new local show called The Mighty Dubfest in June 2010. The body had only come off in February though, so time was tight."

The entire 'shell was etch primed before three

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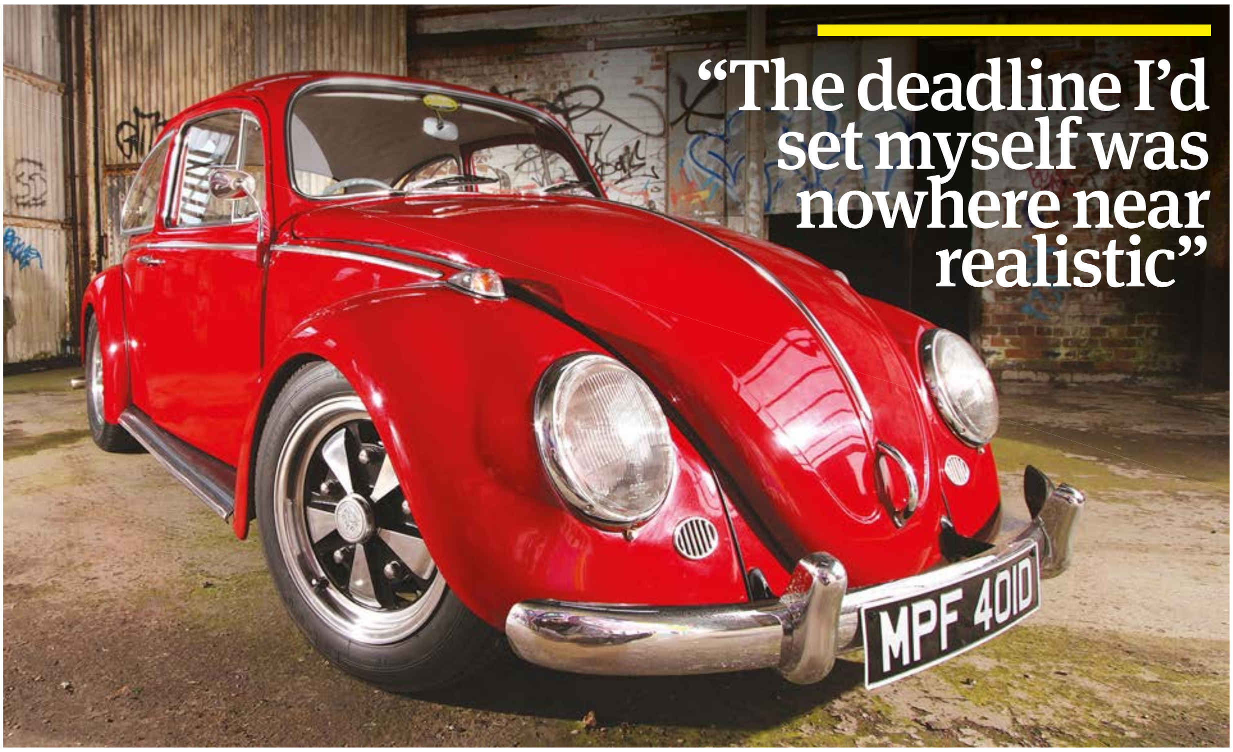
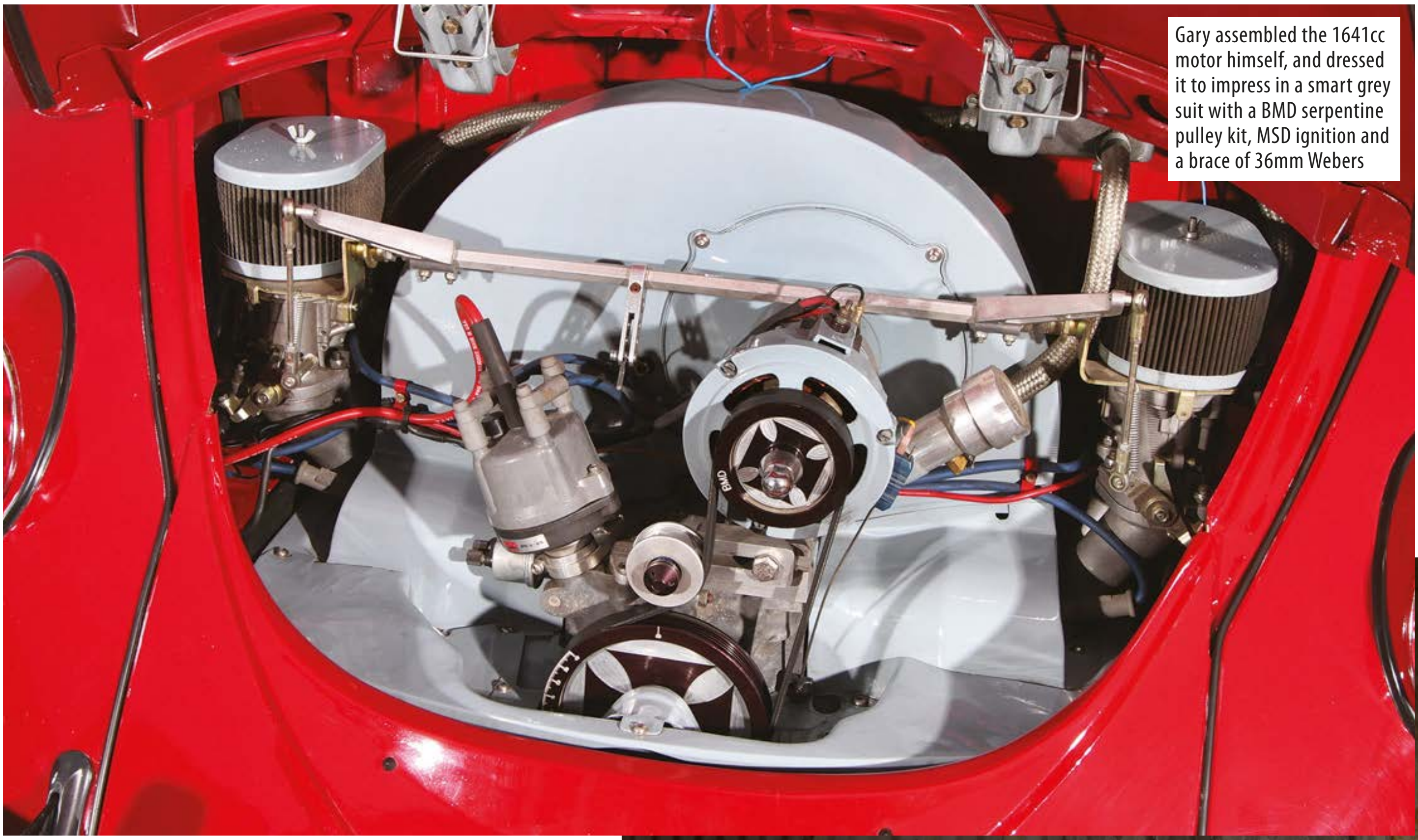


"The deadline I'd set myself was nowhere near realistic"

Standard red for a '66 is Ruby Red, but this one is covered in VW Salsa Red taken from the current Eos model



Gary assembled the 1641cc motor himself, and dressed it to impress in a smart grey suit with a BMD serpentine pulley kit, MSD ignition and a brace of 36mm Webers

coats of high-build primer went on, followed by five layers of LA3H VW Salsa Red (as found on the latest VW Eos). Remember, this was all done outside, on the driveway! "I set up a gazebo with a tarp stretched between it and the garage roof. I covered the drive in sheets to protect the paving, fired up the compressor and made sure I laid down enough paint to rub it back to as good a finish as possible afterwards."

Due to working outside, Gary used a super-fast hardener so the paint went off quicker than usual, then left it for a couple of weeks to fully air cure. The one hazard of spraying a car on your own driveway? Overspray! "I'd left about a foot gap all the way around the bottom of my make-shift booth and didn't realise my neighbour was home. That little mistake cost me two days of polishing red spots from my neighbour's black Volvo. Luckily, we get on well!"

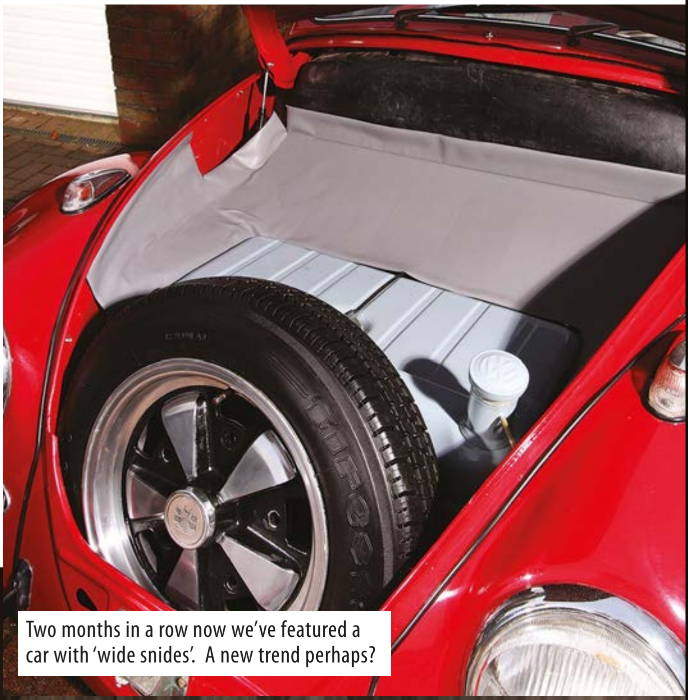
How's this for an entirely DIY resto? From welding to paint and everything else in between and after, Gary did the lot on his driveway at home

Achieving the look

The style choice from the outset was always Resto Cal. "I installed rear pop-outs that I found for a bargain £70, and the American Eagle wide-5 'Fuchs' (aka 'wide snides', as you'll recall from last month) had been hanging around the garage for about a month after the car arrived. The obligatory Gene Berg shifter, along with a 5-inch tach and matching oil temperature and pressure gauges, all help to achieve the look I was going for." The 52mm gauges are housed in a handmade surround that Gary welded into the original dash grille aperture. "It was a nightmare job, but well worth it."

Throughout the restoration, Gary and Claire went through two cycles of IVF with no joy. But, five months after the '66 was re-born, the happy couple were celebrating their first born. "We were pretty much resigned to the fact we weren't going to have any children when little Archie came along in November 2010. He's an ace addition to our lives and loves getting stuck in with a big hammer whenever I'm in the garage tinkering." Gary also has a barn find '63 currently in the works, which sadly means this '66 will have to be moved on to finance it. However, with his wingman, Archie, on hand, we doubt it's the last time you'll see the name Brent in these pages. ■

"That little mistake cost me two days of polishing red spots from my neighbour's black Volvo"

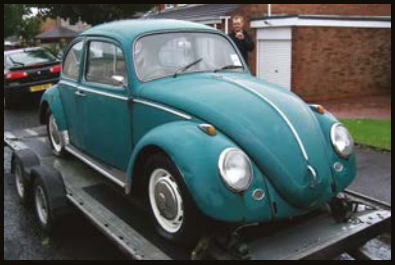


Two months in a row now we've featured a car with 'wide snides'. A new trend perhaps?

BEHIND THE WHEEL

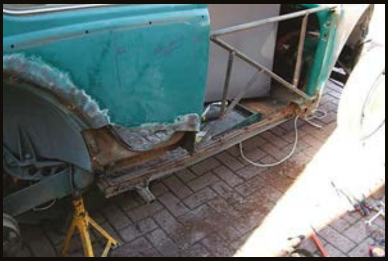
"I hadn't driven a Bug for almost 20 years and the first drive was horrendous, with the car wandering all over the place. However, once the tracking and camber had been sorted, it was superb and it sits comfortably at 70mph on the motorway, even with the standard 1300 'box. It passed its first MoT with no advisories, which really put the icing on the cake. I hear so many great comments from people when they see the finished car that it really makes all the hard work worth it." ■

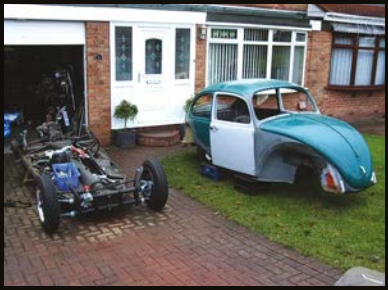
THE BUILD



< AS BOUGHT
Sat on the trailer, the originally Java Green '66 didn't look too bad, but it was cheap (£900) for a reason...

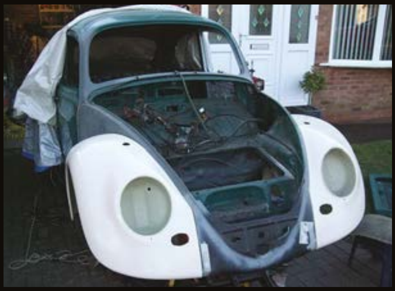
> DIGGING DEEP
Once the tear down was underway though, the full extent of the rot became apparent. It was going to need an awful lot of work to resurrect this one

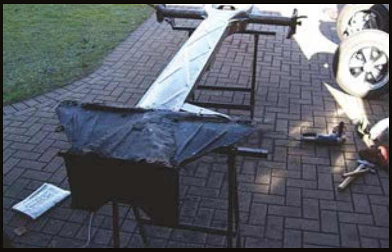




< ROOM FOR ONE?
When the car was apart, there wasn't enough space in the single garage for all the component parts, so the body lived in the front garden while the floorpan was being worked on in the garage

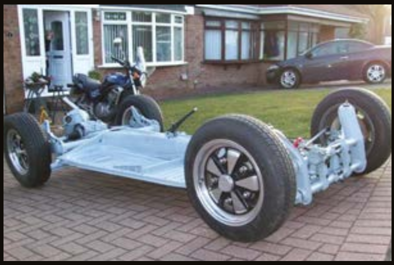
> HAPPY DAYS
Day Mouldings wings were fitted the day they were bought to give the illusion the project was moving forward. A great way to stay motivated when a resto gets you down

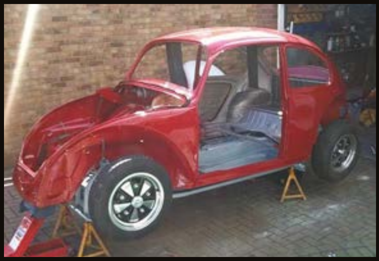




< PAN OF ATTACK
Two complete new floorpan halves went in, as did a new framehead, which Gary describes as the trickiest part of the entire restoration

> SEE ME ROLLIN'
With the 'pan painted in grey and rolling on its American Eagles, the project was really starting to come together





< FITS AND STARTS
This was the momentous day though. With the painted body back on the floorpan, the whole shebang finally fitted in the garage again!

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Freddy files

The annual British invasion of Belgium is officially called the Freddy Files, but is more commonly known simply by its location – Ninove

Words Si Medlicott **Photos** Si and Dan du Cros

Now into its 17th year, this season opener is attended by the hardcore of the European VW scene. It's officially a one-day show, and it's always a gamble due to the uncertainty of the weather but, come the Sunday, a sleepy little town 20 miles west of Brussells turns the clocks back to the 1960s.

Local shop windows are filled with air-cooled paraphernalia – NOS VW parts boxes, genuine accessory wheels and all kind desirable objects – as the whole town gets in the mood. In fact, any non air-cooled car left in the town by 8am on the Sunday morning is removed by the police! Imagine that happening in the UK.

For many of us Brits heading to the show, it all begins on Saturday morning at Folkestone Chunnel terminal. Once in France, everyone congregates at the Bonjour services before heading to Ninove, but more importantly the Witkap brewery!

Arriving at the brewery is always a pleasure, the officials and the owners are all very happy to welcome us in. It fills up rapidly with the majority of people from the UK, but also a small number of Dutch, French and Belgian attendees. The beer flows and the mood is always great.

After the brewery, most people disappear to hotels and prepare for the evening meal laid on by show organiser, Freddy Peeters. After this, everyone heads to Roxy bar in the town centre where it gets messy…

The Sunday morning of the official show is a sight to behold. The town literally becomes gridlocked with cool VWs. Now, I'm not talking stockers, as this really isn't a meet where many attend. I'm talking seriously slammed or modified cars, ranging from original-paint Splits to incredibly detailed Cabriolets and Karmann Ghias. This year's theme was vintage speed, and I've never seen so many Okrasa, Judson and early vintage carb and supercharger kits in one place.

By midday, it was starting to look like there was no space left, but Freddy had arranged an overflow car park and, before long, Ninove was totally full. Crammed.

I know some people have a fear of European shows, whether it be the distance, price, or simply the unknown, but I totally recommend this show. From Calais, it's around two and a half hours driving time, and with ferry tickets available from as little as £40, it's not as expensive as you might think. Especially when entry to the show itself it only 10€. If great beer and cool air-cooled cars are your thing, Ninove is for you. Best of all, there wasn't a T5 in sight. ■

The DTA waiting patiently outside the brewery

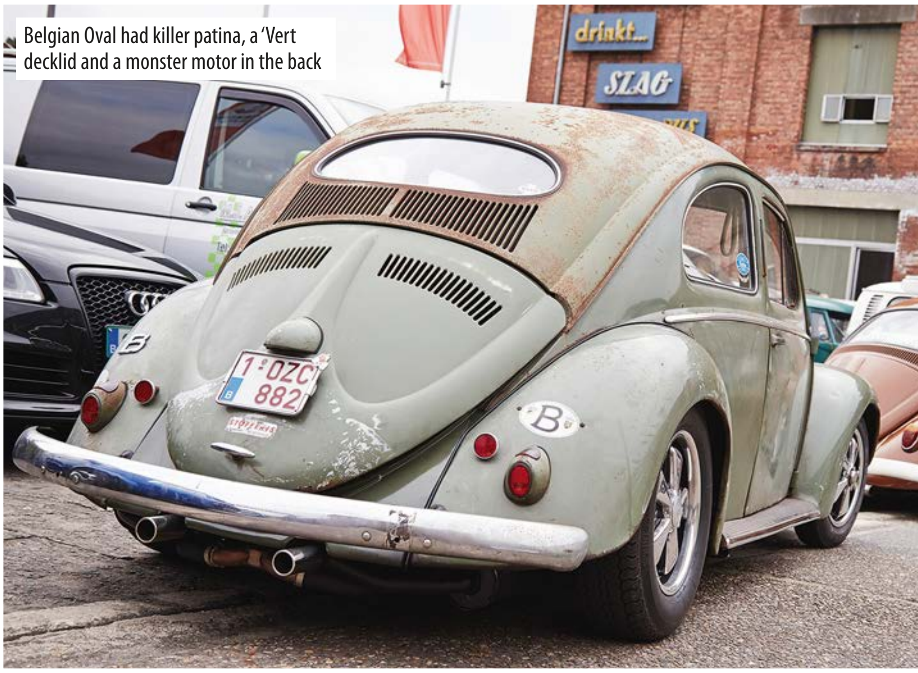
Looking at this picture your could almost be forgiven for thinking this was a UK show. How many Brits?

Saturday's gathering centered around the Witkap brewery. A lot of beer was consumed

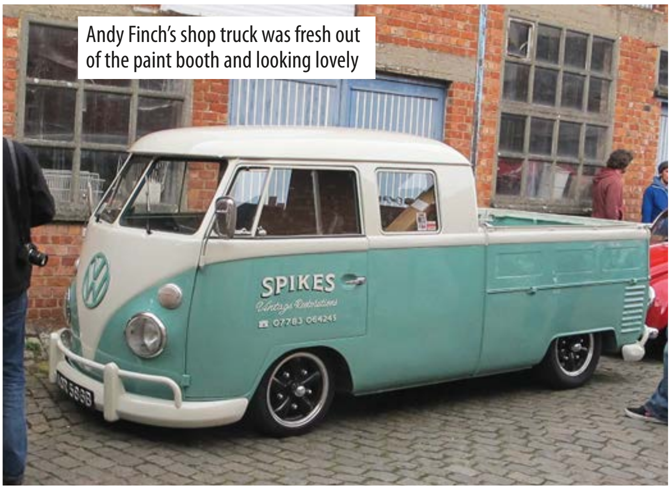
WITKAP-PATER
WITKAP-PATER

The unoffical start to the show kicks of at the brewery

It wouldn't be a Ninove report without the obligatory beer on safaris shot



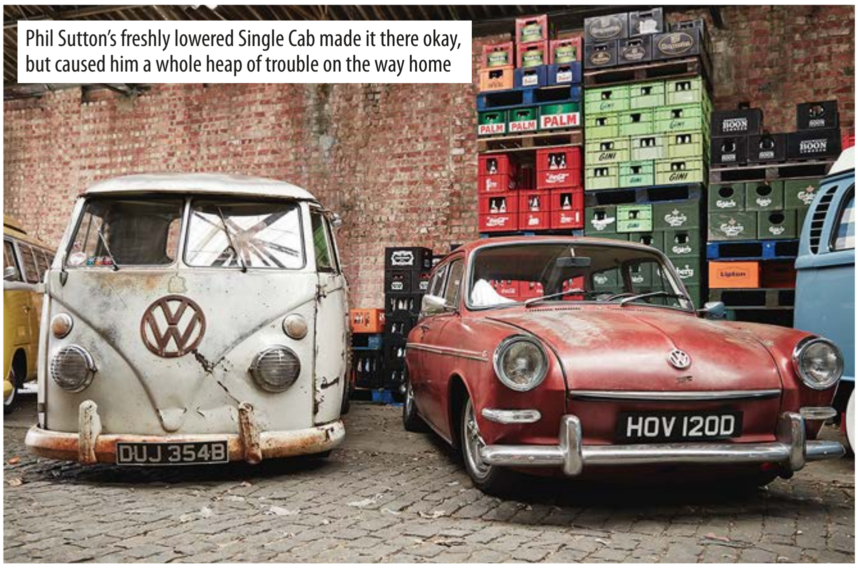
Belgian Oval had killer patina, a 'Vert decklid and a monster motor in the back



Andy Finch's shop truck was fresh out of the paint booth and looking lovely

SPIKES
Vintage Restorations

It's always the same – one person doing the work and four 'advisors'



Phil Sutton's freshly lowered Single Cab made it there okay, but caused him a whole heap of trouble on the way home

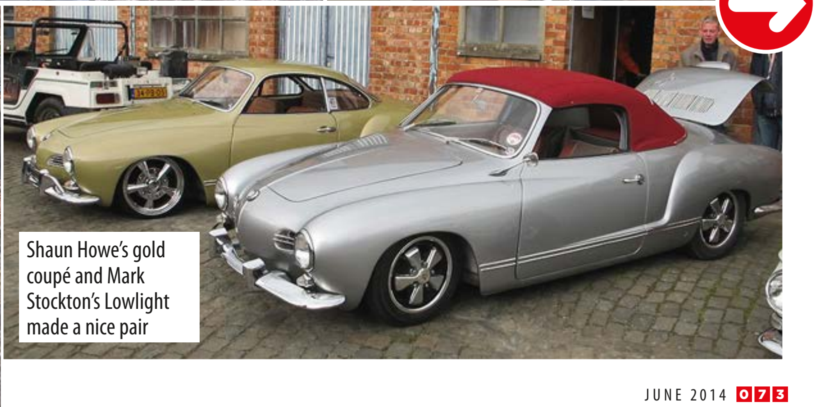
DUJ 354B
HOV 120D

Witkap brewery has been in the same family for generations. That's the youngest now on the bar

There were plenty of hangovers come the morn'

WITKAP · PATER

Hair of the dog, Ninove-style



Shaun Howe's gold coupé and Mark Stockton's Lowlight made a nice pair

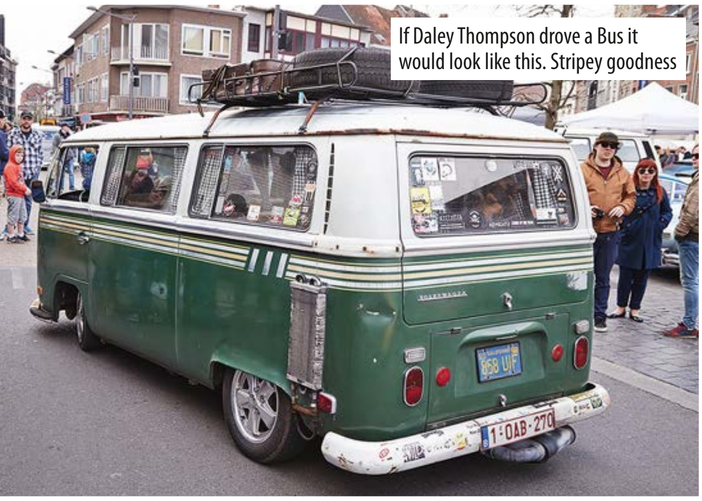
SHOW REPORT
Ninove

Wheel appeal. Cal Look fans had plenty to drool over, too

Belgian 13-window looks box fresh, and you may remember it from The *VoWo* Show two years back

Makes a change to see a Type 3 with its original beam

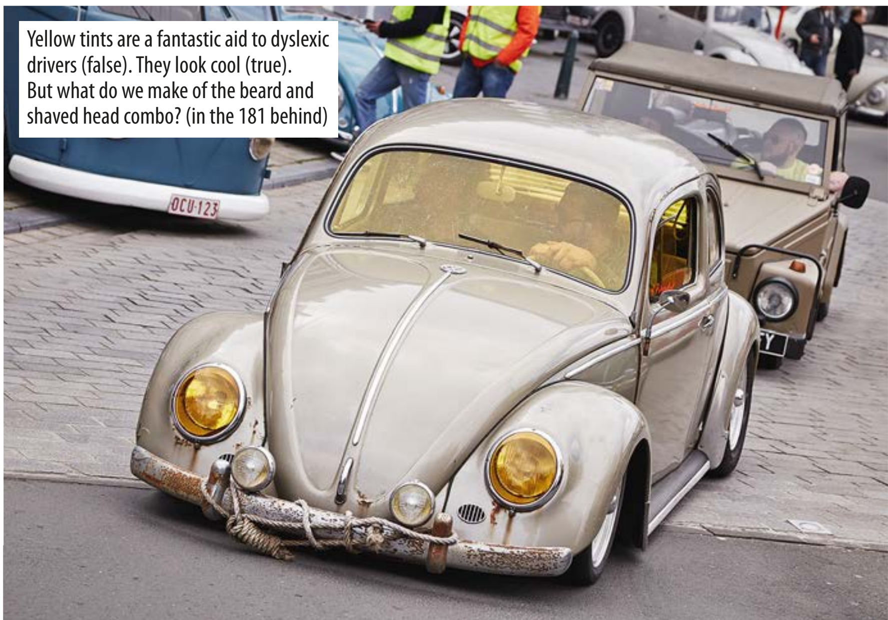
Dieter Pieraerts' Flandria-liveried Single Cab works for us



If Daley Thompson drove a Bus it would look like this. Stripey goodness

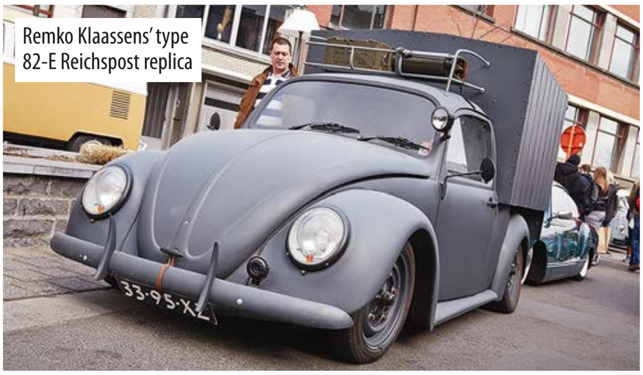
Julia and Vincent's air-equipped Oval looks awesome panned over its Der Steiner Rads

Word is this was the busiest Freddy Files ever. The gates on Sunday were busy all day long



Yellow tints are a fantastic aid to dyslexic drivers (false). They look cool (true). But what do we make of the beard and shaved head combo? (in the 181 behind)

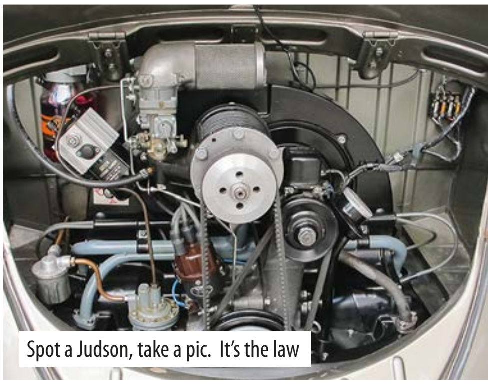
Coral Red Cal Look Oval ragtop (try saying that fast five times) from France has been around for years, and still looks immaculate



Remko Klaassens' type 82-E Reichspost replica

Dutch Ghia on air and 17-inch Fuchs has had a ton of work to get it sitting like this

Former *VolksWorld* feature car, Rutger Eijke's '64 Ghia, still looking strong on those Enkei slots



Spot a Judson, take a pic. It's the law

Belgian Barndoor looked ace in PGSG colours

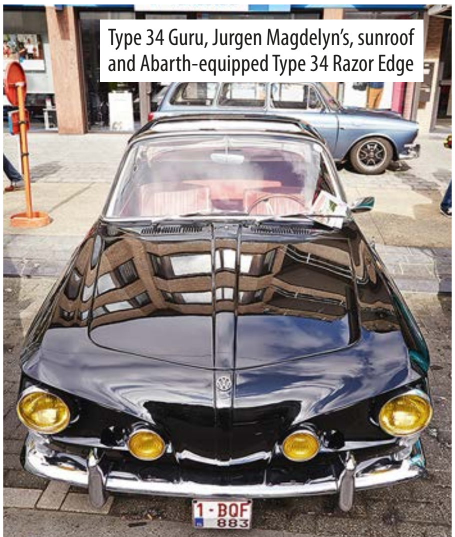
This is the Split the Judson on the right belonged to

It wasn't really safari weather but, if you've got 'em, what the hoo

Swapmeet was well stocked with all manner of interesting clobber

This 50 shades of brown Fasty belongs to Sinclair Ellis

Not everything in Ninove that weekend was low



Type 34 Guru, Jurgen Magdelyn's, sunroof and Abarth-equipped Type 34 Razor Edge

From Germany, the chocolate brown 'Vert of Tristan Cornil. Yum yum

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■ SHOW 'N' SHINE

If you own a nice Bus or Transporter, then we suggest you enter it for the show 'n' shine competition. Apart from just showing off your vehicle, everybody will be given the opportunity to tell the crowd about their ride.

■ SOAP BOX CHALLENGE

This is your chance to prove you can build the fastest, best looking or just the most ridiculous looking soap box racer on the planet. No pedals are required, but make sure you fit brakes and strap yourself in for something special we have for you at the finish…

■ CLUBS

Make sure you book a club display for you and your club members. On top of a range of inter-club activities, you'll get a reserved camping area, a free club stand and lots of entertainment especially for you. Can your club come out top over the weekend and be crowned Best Club at the Castle?

■ CAMPING

Arrive Friday afternoon, depart late Sunday evening and in between wake up each morning to glorious views of the castle. We have loads of free entertainment laid on and we'll ensure there are plenty of serviced toilets and hot showers to make your stay the best experience possible.

■ FOOD AND DRINK

We will have plenty on offer, with an on-site bar and a choice of catering units, but you are welcome to bring your own food and drink. No restrictions, no searches, just come and enjoy yourself.

■ MUSIC

An important part of any VW event is the music, so we have gone all out to offer you a fantastic selection over the weekend. The Transporter Stage will have a full programme of bands on Saturday and Sunday from noon 'til late. We'll have something for everyone – new and original artists, plus some of the best cover bands in the country. Bring a blanket, sit down or have a dance. For those that like dance music, the Split Screen Marquee will have great DJs playing late into the night.

■ DOGS

We love dogs at The *Camper&Bus* Show, and are very pleased to be able to invite your four-legged friends to the show. We will have competitions for them all weekend, including dog agility trials, posh pooch competition, dog fancy dress and even a prize for the dog that looks most like its owner!

■ SOMETHING FOR THE KIDS

All children under 17 get free entry to The *Camper&Bus* Show, so make sure you bring the kids with you. We will have enough free stuff going on to keep them amused all weekend, including circus skills, lifesize table football, mini Olympics, crafts tent, kids' disco and much more.

…plus loads more to come!

Show info: www.vwcamperandbus.com/show

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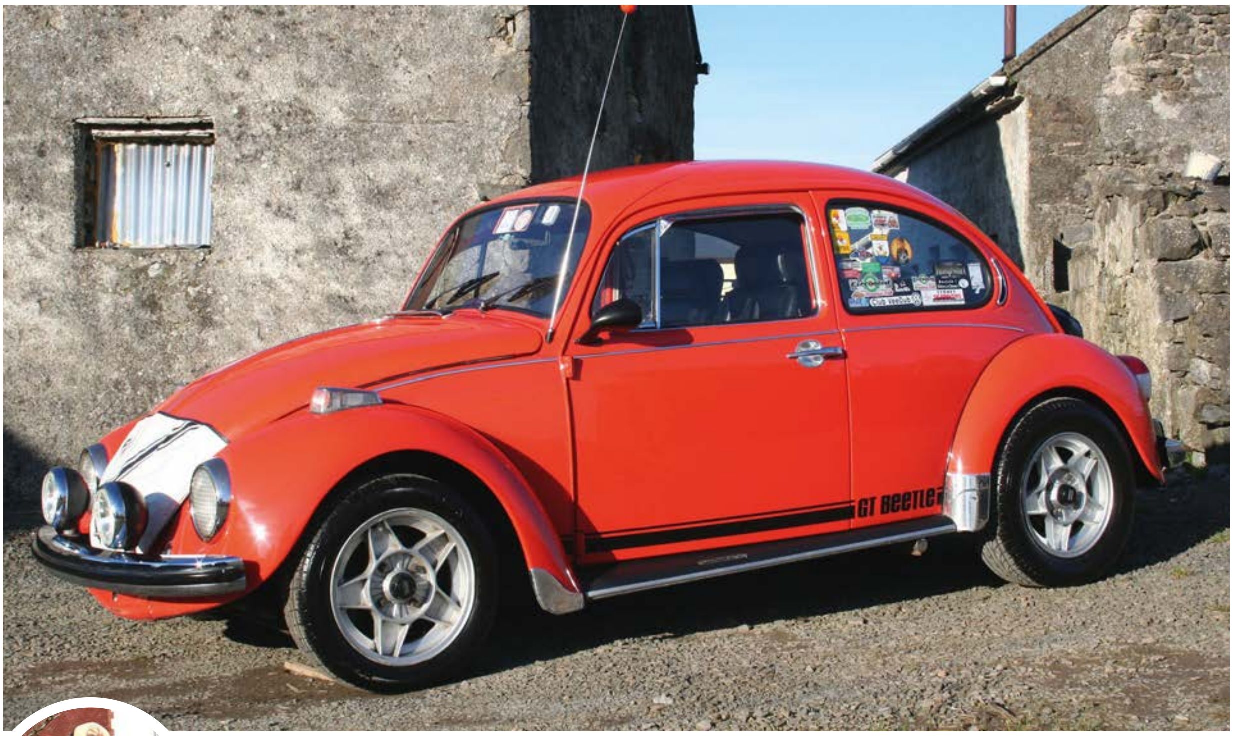
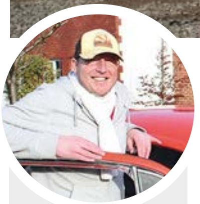


With its ATS Classics, spots, Vitaloni California mirrors and Kamei kit, Cathal's GT looks every inch the '70's special it is



Project GT (Gran Turdismo)

Oh no, here we go again. Cathal has taken a closer look at another one of his fleet and, whilst it's now a good runner, there's trouble ahead…

OWNER INFO

NAME:
Cathal O'Toole

CARS OWNED:
'65 Beetle, GT Beetle, '77 Beetle, '71 ex-VW demo Beetle

WORK THIS MONTH:
Get the car running and stopping as it should. Oh, and sort the rusty framehead!

It's always the way when you finally finish a project, the last thing you want to do is work on it again. This was definitely the case with my GT Beetle, only I think I took it a little too far in so much as I was heading towards five years on the road since doing any major work on the car, which, in anyone's language, is pulling the proverbial!

The bodywork was finished in 2006 and the restoration finished in 2009, thanks to the help of Donal Dollery and Dom Treacy who rescued it (and me) after I had run out of steam (and any useful skills) in my quest to get it back on the road. But for the next five years I enjoyed it, and absolutely hated the thought of taking it off the road to do work on it. If it ain't broke is defintely my motto! To me, my GT Beetle is a car I can hop in and go for a blast in, drive in any weather, park anywhere without fear of a scrape or ding and generally not be too precious about. But eventually, eight years of sitting outside and Sunday morning cobweb blowing had taken its toll, so I made a decision to put some money into it. A few hundred quid should keep things ticking over for another few years, I thought… But then, as is always the case, once you open that can of VW worms, the little wrigglers get away from you.

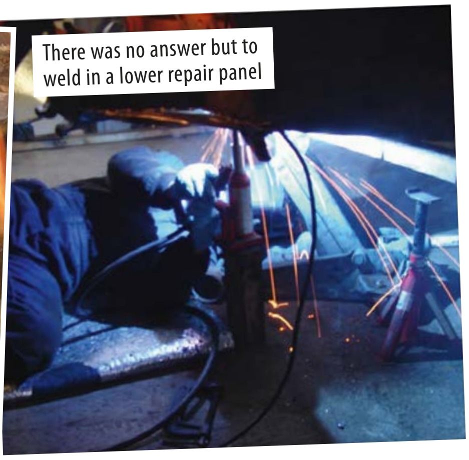
Problem child

To sum up what I felt were the problems: The 1835cc motor wasn't as punchy as before, and the brakes needed some attention. So did the steering. So I called on CustomVolkz in Kilkenny to sort it out. Padraic and Eamon attempted to tune the engine and balance the carbs, but it just wouldn't run right, so a compression test was carried out and it was then that the decision was made to call Antrim-based Bugbitz, whose boss, Dave Wheatley, is a whizz when it comes to all things air cooled and performance. His partner in crime, Ben Lawrence – the organiser of Ireland's first drag day – is the man to talk to about twin carbs, so I was confident the engine was in good hands. After the strip down and inspection, it transpired it needed the following: pistons and barrels, cam followers, a full rebuild, a carb rebuild and a tune up. The gearbox, meanwhile, would benefit from a new main shaft seal and a nosecone mount.

With the engine out, the boys at CustomVolkz fitted the 'Weber windows' (carb inspection panels) I had bought

That rusty seam needs investigating…

…a brake fluid leak from the master cylinder had done the framehead no favours



There was no answer but to weld in a lower repair panel

Inspection panels in the inner wings make work on dual carb engines a world easier

New brakes please. And wheel bearings, and a master cylinder, too

about three years ago and had 'stored' behind the back seat, as you do. Never ones to waste an opportunity, while the rear wings were off they stonechipped the rear quarters and under the wings, before moving onto the front quarters and wings. The chassis also got a shot of stonechip, but not before a new lower framehead panel was welded into place as the original was disintegrating. It turns out the brake master cylinder had been leaking and corrosive fluid lodging itself under the stonechip I put on in 2006.

Other jobs on the list included two rear hub seals, rear brake cylinders and shoes, front and rear anti-roll bar bushes and new fuel lines. That 'few hundred quid' was fast becoming a distant memory. Still, in for a penny, in for a punt, as we say in Ireland.

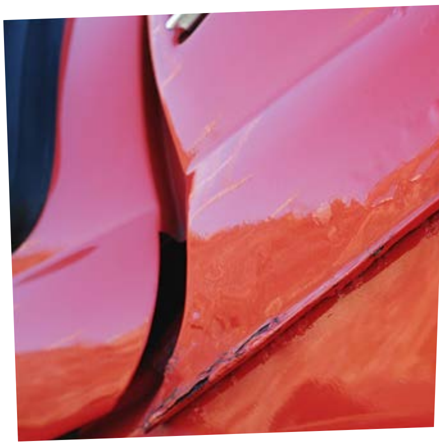
While we were at the front end, the beam was removed, stripped down and a pair of adjusters welded in, in order to raise it slightly. Yes, I said raise it. The reason being the ride height with the 2.5-inch dropped spindles was about half an inch too low, and the Kamei front spoiler kept hitting the roads near my house.

The steering box was stripped down, cleaned and adjusted in order to tighten things up at the front and, as Eamon went through the car from front to back, new wheel bearings, discs, master cylinder and steering column bush were added to the jobs-to-do list. A new ignition switch, some fiddling with the indicator relay and a bit of tidying the engine bay wiring all helped. The car is now like new underneath and performs, handles and stops better than it ever has before.

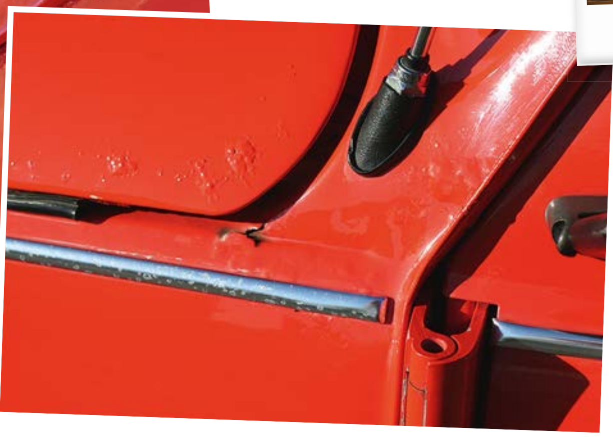
B-road boy

My next issue, however, is the rust that has appeared, as you can see in the pictures below. My next dilemma is do I go for a quick respray, or strip the GT down and have a full repaint? Right now I can't face either as it's a sunny day and I fancy finishing early to enjoy some B-road fun!

All that remains is to say a big thank you to the guys at CustomVolkz for their help. Hit them up on customvolkz@hotmail.com to have a chat about your VW.



The evil that is gutter rot. Sorry Cathal, but a quick respray ain't going to deal with this



See those tell tale little bubbles in the paint on the corner of the bonnet. They're a sure sign that something is amiss in the metal underneath

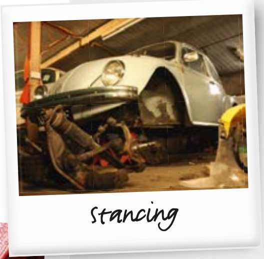
VOLKS WORLD PROJECT CARS

Owner: Steve Gosling
Cars: '61 ragtop, '67 Ghia
This month: Creative Coachworks have been busy painting a load more parts for me. This is the compressor for the air ride system. It was silver, but that didn't fit in with the rest of the car, so now it's polished and black, like everything else mechanical

Owner: Jon Gilbert
Car: '61 ragtop
This month: I managed to take the car out for a quick spin and thoroughly enjoyed it... until the engine started to sound a bit poorly. More on this soon

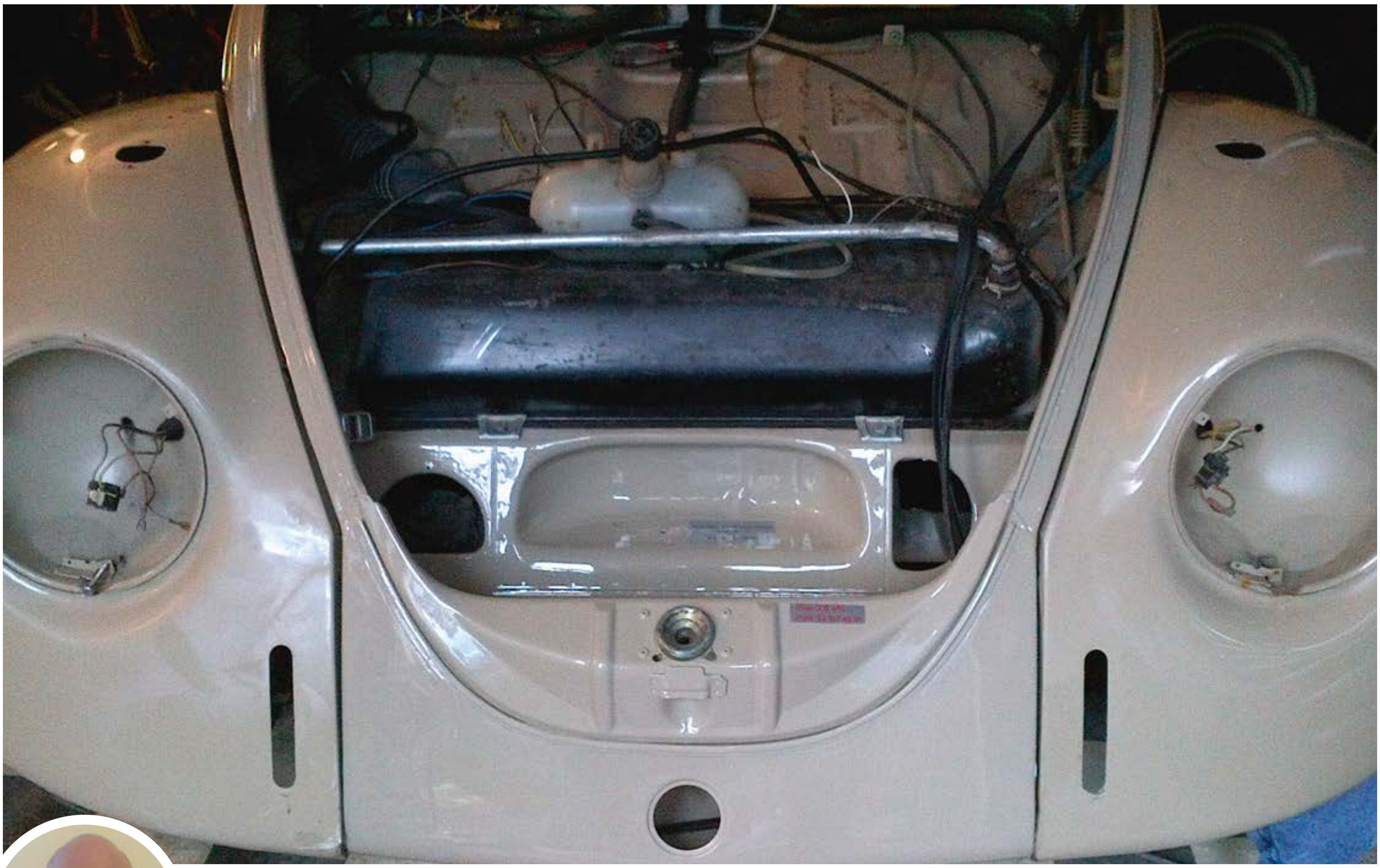
Owner: Gordie Woollacott
Car: '78 Westy Camper
This month: The grotty battery tray area on my Westy is now gone. The area now just needs cleaning up before the new panel can be let in

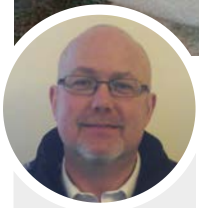
Owner: Toby Walker
Car: '68 Fastback
This month: The engine is back in the Fasty and now running sweet as a nut after a well-earned tweak and tune



Owner: Mark Walker
Car: '68 Beetle
This month: It's exactly a week before The *VolksWorld* Show as I type this and Project '68 is in pieces. The rear is lowered, but I still need to fit the narrowed beam. I think I left it too late to do the paint blending though. . .

Owner: Jon Pratt
Cars: '70 Bay Window
This month: I've been moving house, so not much has happened on the Bus. It's nice to now have it at home though, rather than in a barn miles away. A new garage is planned for this space. Eventually. . .





Paint ball (ache)

After discovering his front wings had been repainted previously, Tony takes two

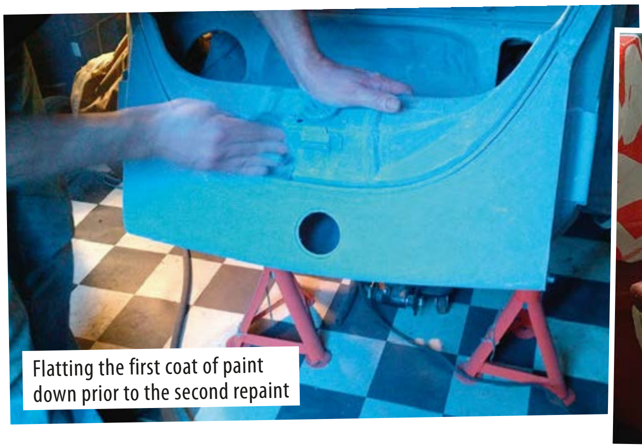
OWNER INFO

NAME: Tony Richardson
AGE: 46
LOCATION: Redhill
CAR: 1968 1300 Beetle
THIS MONTH: Repaint the front valance again, re-assemble and polish the whole car
PLANS: Try and get the engine to fire up again…

Do I wish I hadn't started repairing the front end of Freda? Yes. James (the Ed), you were right. Do I regret doing the repair? Not at all. At least I now know the whole front end of Freda is sound. The nightmare has been that my Beetle has been off the road for three months now, and my only other form of transport broke down when the radiator on my motorcycle cracked. For the air-cooled Puritans, a radiator is something you have with water-cooled engines!

Anyway, having painted the front of the car, only to have the paint dry a darker shade than anticipated, I had some more paint mixed up. Well, you can't have too much paint, can you? It now transpires the front wings have at some point been resprayed a different shade to the body, which was why the front valance looked a different colour when they were bolted up next to each other. Close inspection reveals some overspray on the roof from a historic paint session and some newer paint on the lower half of the nearside door, too. Initially, I took a coloured blanking plate for paint matching, but I now realise I should have taken the petrol flap. Oh well.

While I was working on the front end, I removed the bonnet and painted rust inhibitor along the channel for the bonnet seal. Once this was dry, I masked up the area around the channel and removed the windscreen wipers, before spraying the area with etch primer to provide a suitable surface for the new paint. I then scuffed the painted front valance with a green scourer. You can buy Scotch-Brite pads for this at a paint store, or much cheaper household scourers at a hardware store! Once this area was prepped, I could spray it again with the lighter (hopefully correct) shade. The paint covered well, although I did get a tiny run at the bottom of the valance, which I will have to sort out later. I wasn't sure whether to spray the inner wings with black stone chip or leave them painted beige, as seems to be the trend these days. In the end I left them beige.



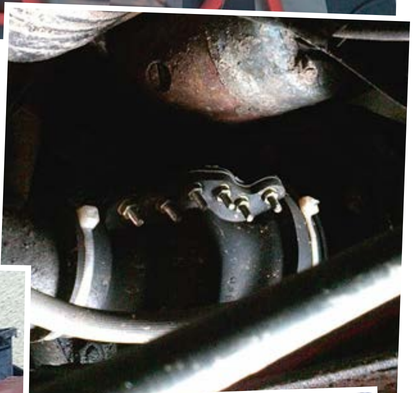
Flatting the first coat of paint down prior to the second repaint

Tony mixing cocktails in his garage. Not quite sure why there's a pack of matches in shot, but we'd advise you don't have naked flames around flammable paint materials!

A bit of grivner in the bonnet seal channel was dealt with using rust inhibitor

Take two. The front valance in its second fresh coat of paint

The engine may still not be starting, but the old spark plug test looks positive



Tony chose to use tiewraps rather than the proper VW-specified metal clips on his axle gaiters. One leaked…

Go carefully using an angle grinder for paint polishing as they don't have a variable speed control

And be especially careful on raised edges and areas like the rain gutters. You can have the paint off these in micro-seconds if you're too enthusiastic!

While I was waiting for the paint to cure fully, I removed the spark plugs as the engine wouldn't start when I last tried about a month ago, so I cleaned them up and let the cylinders vent. I also noticed the gearbox end of the nearside axle gaiter had moved and was now leaking gearbox fluid. I had replaced both axle boots with the repro split types about six months ago, but used cable ties instead of the metal clips supplied. And because I had replaced them with the wheels off the ground, the axle was at such an angle that it made it difficult to fit the boot on straight. This time, I jacked up the rear and placed the axle stands beneath the axle, thereby keeping the axle horizontal. I then replaced the cable ties, ensuring the boot was firmly and squarely against the gearbox. I'll know next time… Unfortunately, whilst underneath, I noticed fluid on the nearside rear brake drum, which appears to be coming from where the hub and the axle meet. Another job that needs doing then. I also saw the plastic heater pipe on the nearside was not positioned correctly, but five minutes of fumbling and that was back in place. Not bad. Three jobs done and only one created.

A couple of days later, with the paint properly dry, I started to polish the whole car, using an angle grinder with a polishing head and G3 cutting compound. The oxidised outer layer came off quickly, revealing a shiny smooth surface beneath. Beware though, this must be done with light motions. Too heavy and you can easily remove too much paint, or burn it. Before I did this, I took the rear bumper off (one bolt snapped), removed the boot lock, the rear number plate, the number plate light and the '1300' badge. I then polished the whole of the rear of the car before moving onto the roof, then the sides and finally the newly painted front. The cutting compound is quite messy, so make sure you wash any residue off immediately after, then dry it with a chamois.

Finally, I replaced the bonnet, attached the wings loosely in order to line them up and fitted a replacement bonnet seal. Unfortunately though, with the spark plugs re-fitted, Freda still wouldn't start. I'll have to come back to that… ■

LEARNER DRIVER
First car, first VW

NAME: **Oliver Vaughan**
CAR: **1967 1300 Beetle**
AGE: **17**

I'll be perfectly honest, my age, lack of funds and being in full-time education seriously inhibits my ability to make any progress on the car. Added to which, my old man is the chief show organiser for The *VolksWorld* Show so he hasn't had any time to help me much either. So what have I been doing? Simple jobs that don't require me spending any actual money, like tidying up the rat's nest of wires behind the dash and under the bonnet. Why do old VWs acquire so many extra wires? What they were once used for is quite beyond me. By the time you read this the show will be out of the way and hopefully my dad can lend a hand.

THE PENNY PINCHER
Patina on a budget

NAME: **James Peene**
CAR: **1966 Beetle**
AGE: **Older than he looks!**

If you were hoping to see a picture of my fully painted floorpan, you're fresh out of luck. I'll save that visual treat for a bigger reveal next month. Suffice to say, with the floorpan in paint, I'm at the stage where I'm going to have to start spending money on parts to build it all back up again. And this is where I've done myself no favours. It was never my intention to do a full Gosling on the car (that's Steve Gosling, not Ryan), but now I have a shiny 'pan I find I only want nice shiny bits to go back on it. But hey, this is the Penny Pincher, and I've managed to save a few quid by recycling an old Slamwerks 4-inch narrowed we had in stock. It just needs a clean and a lick of paint…

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Best of both worlds?

Want both a practical and a slammed VW? Air ride is the only way forward

Words and photos Lawrence Butcher

In the old days, if your VW was lowered, it was probably dropped by two or three inches, maybe four if you were really pushing the boat out. But over the past decade, people have really been pushing the limits of low, using custom-made beams, dropped spindles and various other modifications to allow previously unseen levels of slammage. Unfortunately, unless you really know what you're doing, such dedication to being on the deck comes with consequences – notably spleen-jarring ride quality and a habit of smashing into any speed bumps, hedgehogs or even cat's eyes that cross your path. If the thought of that doesn't appeal, the answer to being able to drop your ride into the weeds, yet hop back up to a more sensible ride height in order to negotiate bumps is air ride.

While the concept of changing VW's tried and tested suspension system to one that relies on compressed air may sound scary, it's actually very simple to do. We spoke to Sam Jeffery of VWorks, who supply the Dub on Air kit featured here, for enlightenment.

Key ingredients

Shocks and through rods. These are the primary components you require. While technically you could simply bolt on a pair of air shocks, add a Schrader valve (the same as you'll find on a car tyre) and pump your suspension up and down using a portable compressor, or even a foot pump, this isn't practical on a regular basis.

The majority of front suspension set ups now use combined air bag / damper units. These consist of a regular oil filled damper, around which is fitted an air bag that can be inflated and deflated. The way they work is the air in the bag replaces the spring in the suspension or, in the case of a Beetle, the torsion leaf stacks. These are generally removed entirely and replaced with solid through rods. The rate of the air 'spring' changes depending on the pressure within the bag – the higher the pressure, the greater the spring rate, and vice versa. Small changes in the air pressure can be used to make the ride harder or softer but, given sufficient pressure, the weight of the vehicle acting on the spring can be overcome and the chassis raised. Likewise, if the pressure is significantly reduced, lowered. This is why they are the ideal option for those wanting to slam their cars, yet retain a level of practicality, too.

Compressor and tank. It is the ability to adjust the suspension on the move that is the real appeal of air ride. To achieve this, you needs an onboard air supply, and a means of storing it. This job is neatly taken care of by an air tank. You also need a means of filling the tank, which is where the compressor comes in. Without this, once the air tank is empty, the air suspension is inoperable. The size of the tank is the limiting factor on how many times you can raise and lower the suspension between charges, while the size of the compressor directly affects the speed you will be able to refill the air tank.

> "The air in the bag replaces the spring in the suspension"

Air management

That's all pretty simple, right? But it's the ability to control the flow of air in and out of the air shocks that makes it possible to precisely adjust ride height. This is achieved by using valves between the tank and the shocks. The number of valves governs the level of control you have over the system. For example, a single valve on a front-only air ride system will allow basic up and down movement, but separate valves controlling each shock will allow individual wheel adjustments to be made.

Switching the valves on and off can be achieved in one of two ways. The first uses an electrical switch and a solenoid valve, that is opened and closed electronically. The second, more affordable, method is a simple analogue air switch. This is nothing more than a toggle switch with an inlet and outlet pipe that is run in series between the tank and shock. The basic air management system that comes with the Dub on Air kit incorporates this switch into a panel with a pressure gauge to show how much pressure is in the shocks.

The last thing to consider is the plumbing that joins all these components together. The kit shown here is so simple to fit literally anyone could do it. 6mm plastic air hoses are run between the various components and are attached with push-fit connectors. It's as simple as that. All of the parts shown here are available from Dub on Air as a complete, ready-to-fit kit, providing around six inches of adjustment in the front suspension. As fitting air to the rear suspension is a little more involved, with most commercially available kits using air bags that require mounts be welded to the chassis, we will cover that separately in a later feature.

Fitting this front-end kit is simplicity itself, and doesn't even require the front beam be removed to do so. However, the torsion leaves do need to be removed and replaced by through rods. These locate the trailing arms either end, and allow them to swing freely up and down, leaving the air shocks to take on the roles of both damping and springing. As a side note, the fitting process is essentially the same for king and link and balljoint cars.

JOB INFO

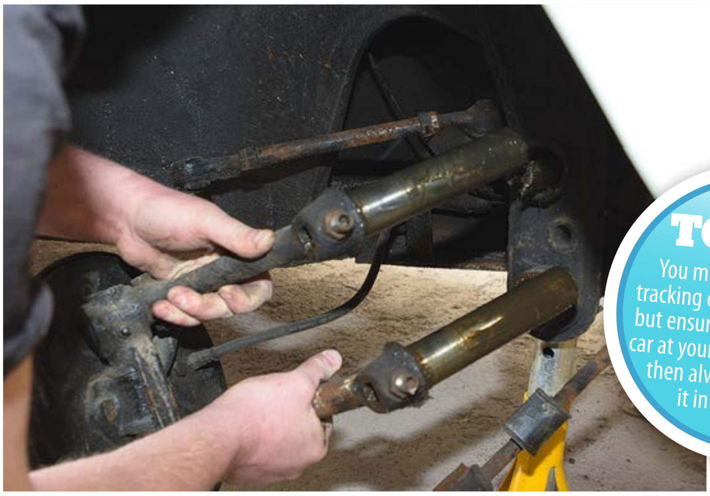
TOOLS NEEDED: Basic hand tools, jack, axle stands

MATERIALS USED: Grease, air

TIME TAKEN: 4 hours, but set aside a day if you've never done anything like this before

COST DIY: £700 for the basic kit shown here

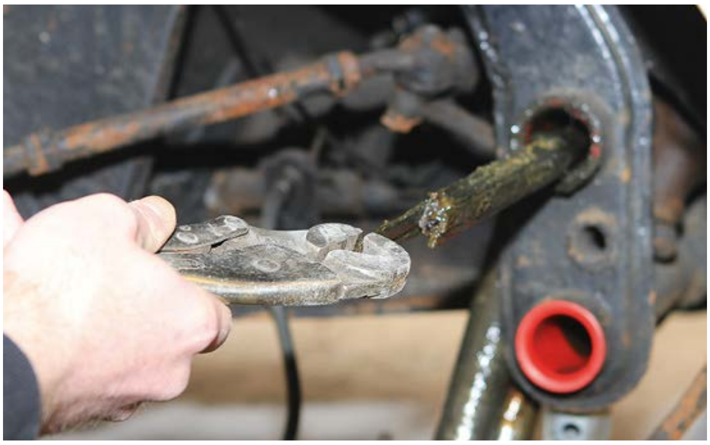
PRO: £1,100, fitted



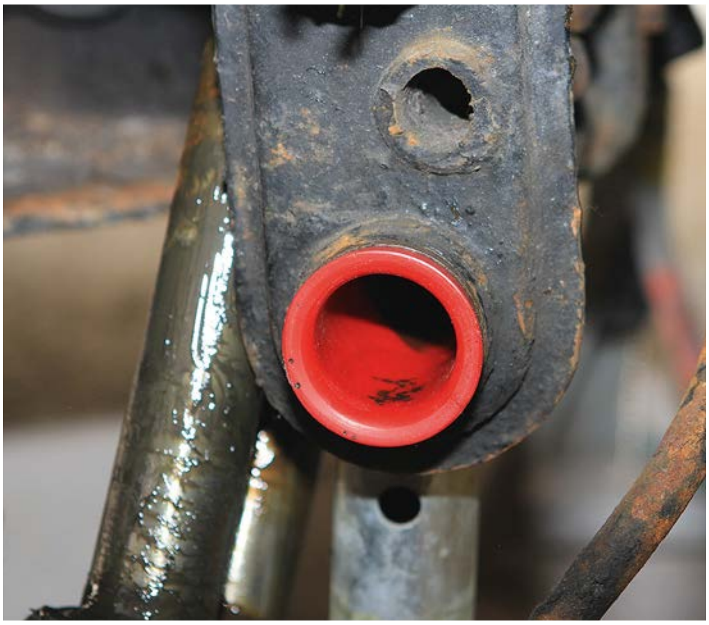
01 The first job is to prepare the front beam to accept the air shocks. Start by removing the trailing arms from the suspension. This is achieved by disconnecting the steering arm, then loosening the two Allen-head grub screws that secure the torsion leaves. With these loose, you should simply be able to slide the arms out, spindle and all

TOP TIP

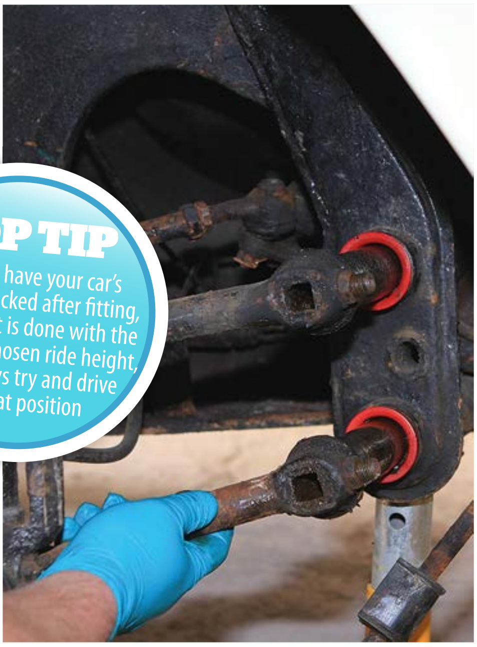
You must have your car's tracking checked after fitting, but ensure it is done with the car at your chosen ride height, then always try and drive it in that position



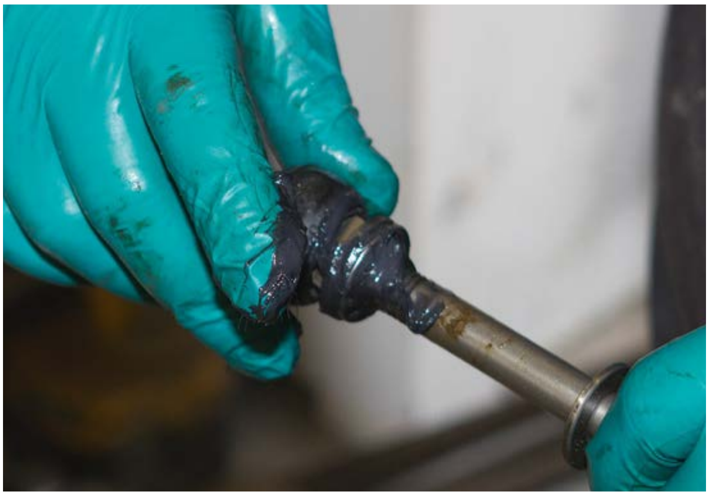
02 With both sets of arms and the centre grub screws removed, pull the torsion leaves out. They will be very greasy, so it's a good idea to wear a pair of gloves and grip the leaf stacks with Mole grips



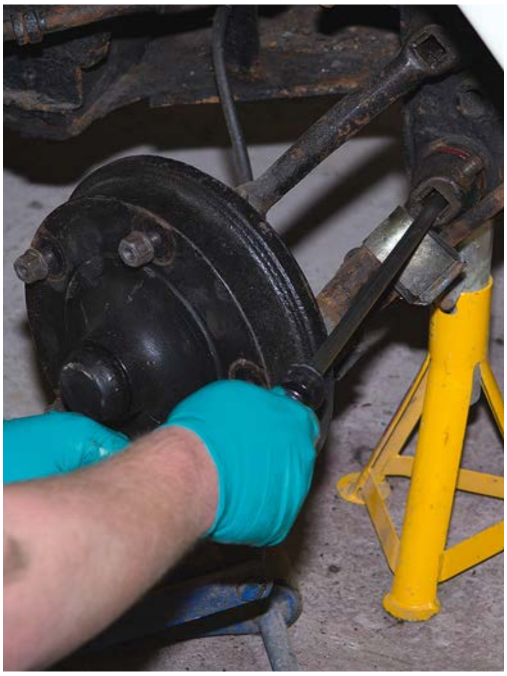
03 Dub on Air recommends the use of polyurethane bushes instead of the standard needle roller bearings. This is due to their providing a smooth surface for the trailing arms to move against and also because they help to locate the arms laterally



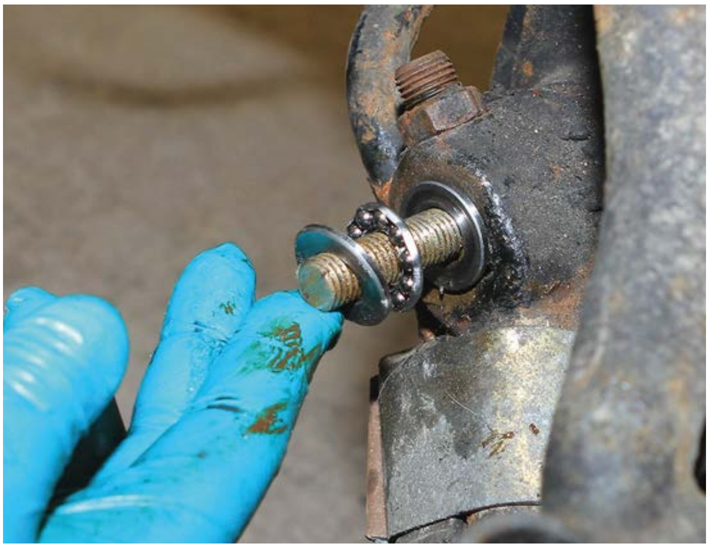
04 With the leaves out of the way, replace the trailing arms in the beam, having removed the caps that seal up the section where the leaves slid into the arms. These may well have been lost over the years, but if they are still in place, drift them out with a hammer and punch



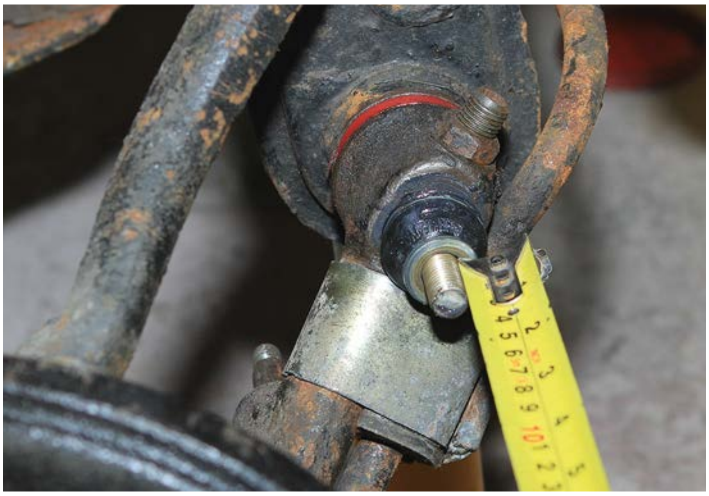
05 Assemble one end of the through rod supplied. The assembly order is: bearing, half nut, seal, thrust washer and locking collar. Coat it with a liberal amount of grease to ensure it will keep running smoothly for years to come



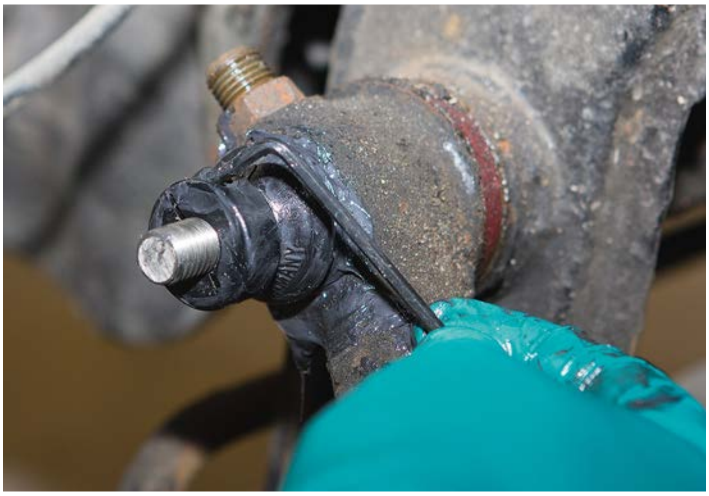
06 Next, slide the through rod into the beam until it pops out of the other side…



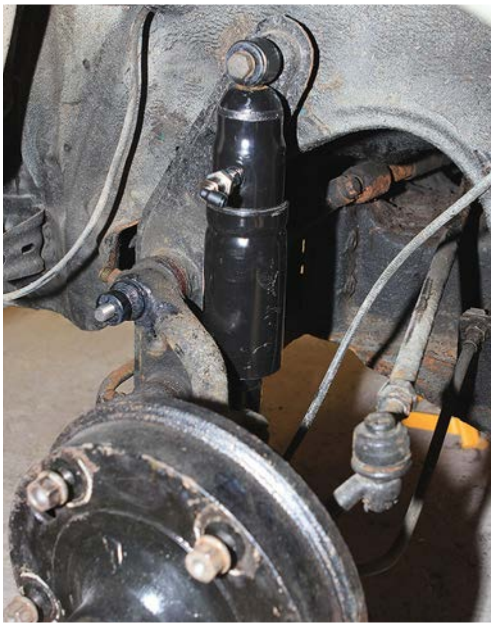
07 The other end of the rod has to be assembled in situ. It is handy at this point to have someone helping to hold the rod to prevent it sliding back out of the beam



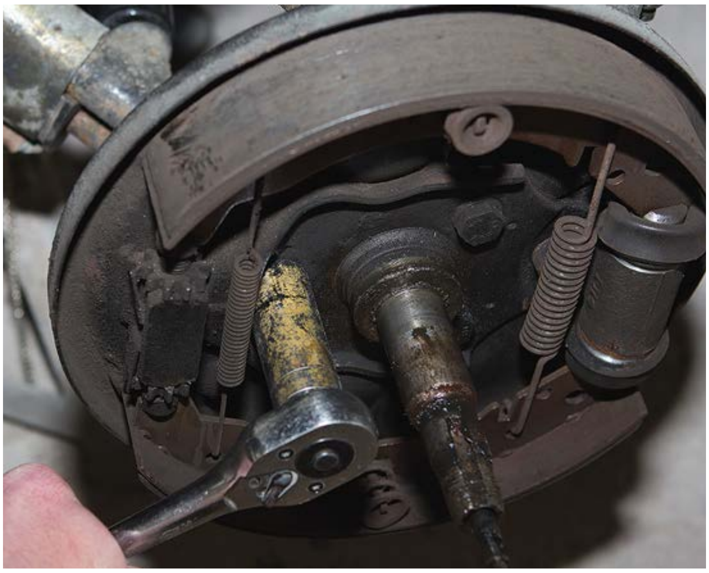
08 With the bearing and half nut in place, and the trailing arms snugged up to the bushing, measure how much thread is protruding. Adjust the rod until you have an even amount of thread showing on each side to ensure it is centred



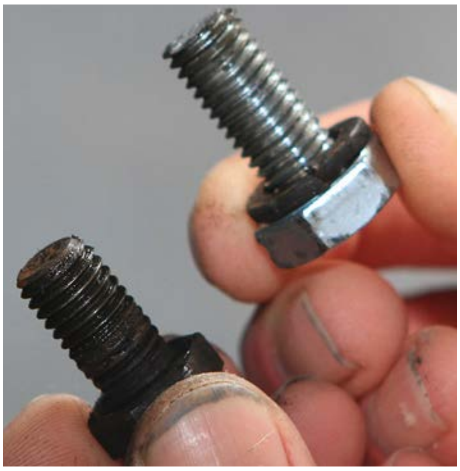
09 Once you are happy the rod is in the correct position, tighten the half nuts up until the arms are tight against the beam bushing. You want them to be tight enough to eliminate any side-to-side play, but not so tight they restrict movement of the arms. Once the desired tightness is reached, snug the locking ring up to the rubber seal and clamp it in place



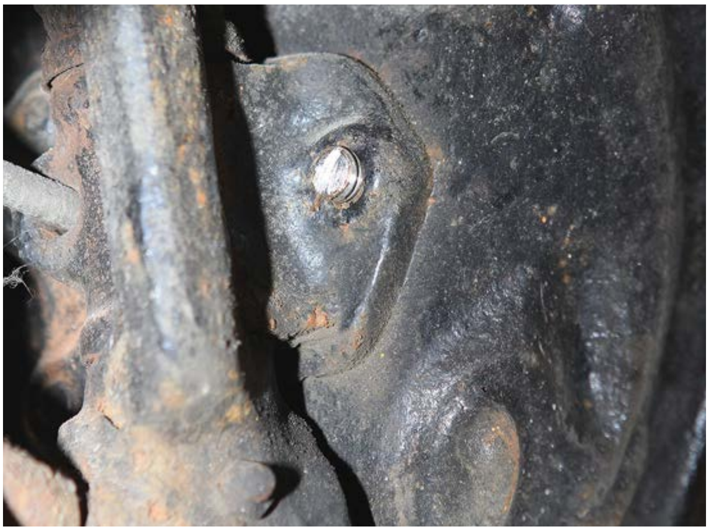
10 Fitting the air shocks is as simple as removing the stock ones you took off earlier, and uses the same fixings. The only thing to be aware of is ensuring the air fitting is facing out. Depending on the year of car, you may find a small amount of material needs to be ground off the inside face of the trailing arm to prevent it scuffing the shock. This can be done with an angle grinder and flap wheel



11 The next task is to reduce the amount of steering lock available to prevent things catching when the car is fully lowered. On balljoint cars, this is done by adjusting the steering stop on the beam. King and link pin beams have no such stop, so steering movement is halted when the pivoting section of the spindle hits the spindle body. This systems does not allow for adjustment, but Dub on Air have come up with a cunning solution – a longer backing plate bolt that extends out of the spindle by a few mm, reducing the amount of lock available and helping prevent any wheel / body arguments. To fit the bolt, whip off the brake drum and remove the front most bolt

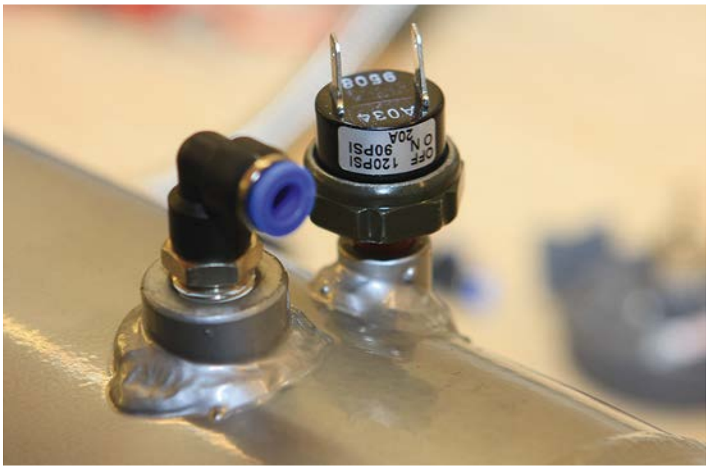


12 Here you can see the subtle difference in length between the stock bolt (left) and the replacement high tensile bolt

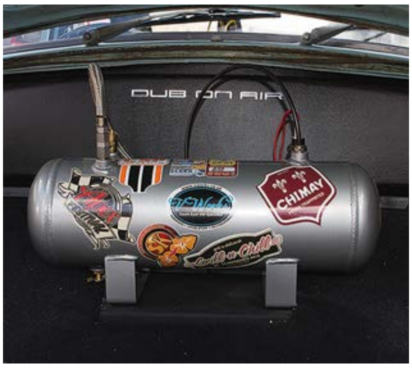


13 Wind the bolt into place and secure it with a little Loctite, remembering to transfer the spring washer from the standard bolt. Note how the new bolt sits slightly proud of the back of the spindle. When you are done, reassemble the drums and ensure everything is correctly tightened, but don't put the wheels back on just yet

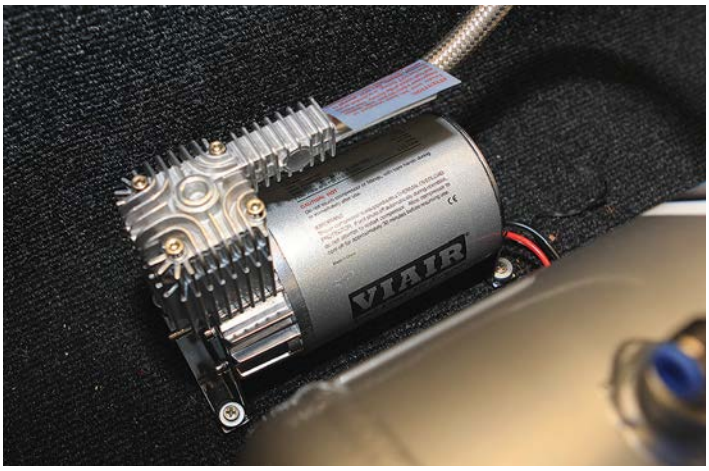
14 The air tank comes supplied with fittings, but the exact location of each part is left up to the individual as it depends where you want to run the air lines. This fitting is for the feed from the compressor. The fitting is supplied with a sealant on the thread, so no PTFE tape is needed to ensure it is air tight



15 The blue fitting is the feed to the shocks, while the electrical connection is a pressure switch that shuts the compressor off when it reaches a certain pressure and turns it back on when the pressure drops. As you can see from the sticker, in this case the compressor is shut off at 120psi and turned on below 90psi

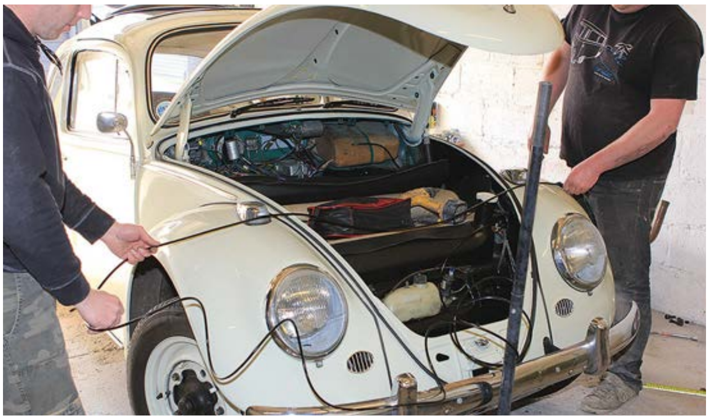


16 The air tank can be located anywhere there is space, the most common place being behind the rear seat (below). However, some people choose to fit theirs under the bonnet (left). It is secured in place using threaded fixings known as riv-nuts, but you can just bolt it straight through the floor with some large washers on the underside

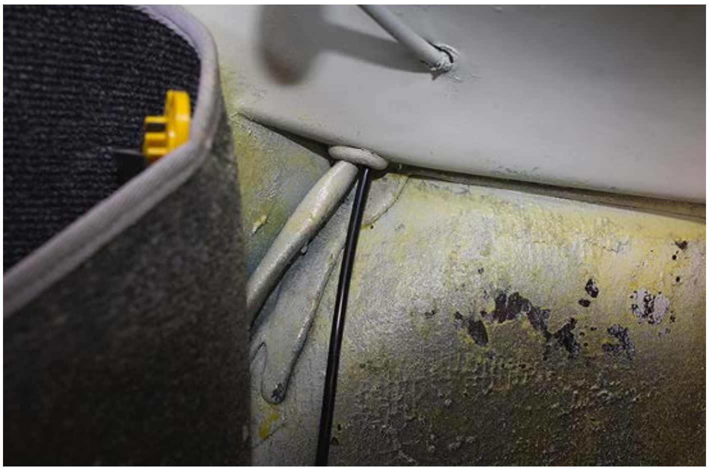


17 The air pump, or compressor, is also fixed in position. It comes supplied with rubber mountings to help reduce vibration and noise, but be aware these things are noisy and you may soon tire of having it in the cabin with you

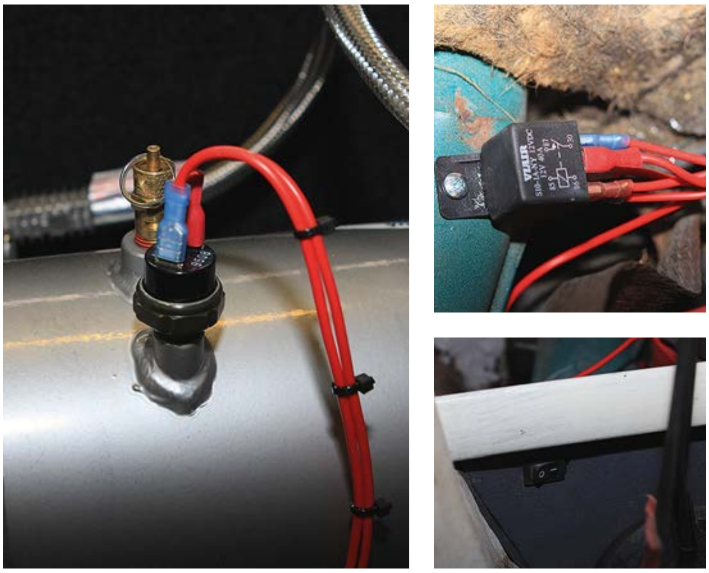
18 Connecting the compressor to the tank is very simple, but it still pays to read the labels. This particular connection is a ¼-inch NPT thread, which relies on an interference fit between the threads to create a seal. It is therefore common to have threads left showing when the connector is tight



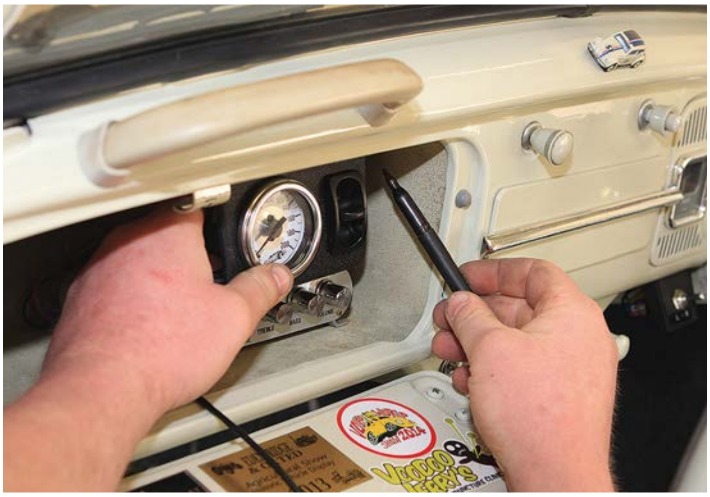
19 With the main components in place, it is time to run the air lines. The front shocks are fed by a single 6mm pipe from the rear that splits under the bonnet using a t-piece. When you have the air hoses the desired length, trim them and attach using the push-fit connectors supplied



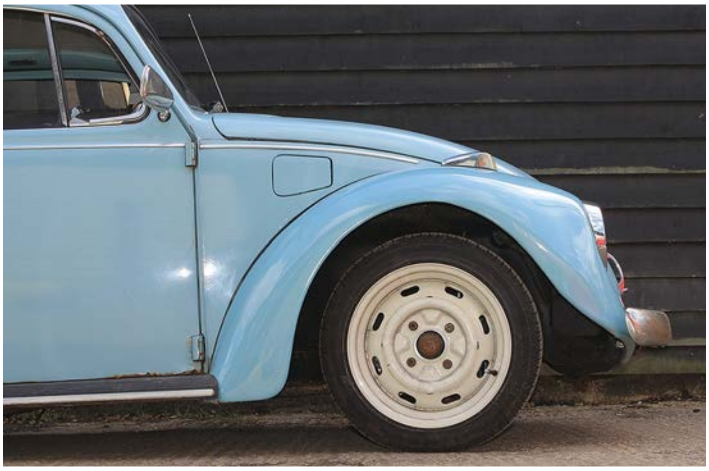
20 To save drilling any extra holes in the bulkhead, the air line can be run through the existing wiring grommet in the passenger-side footwell. This pipe runs to the back of the gauge cluster in the glove box, then down to the front shocks



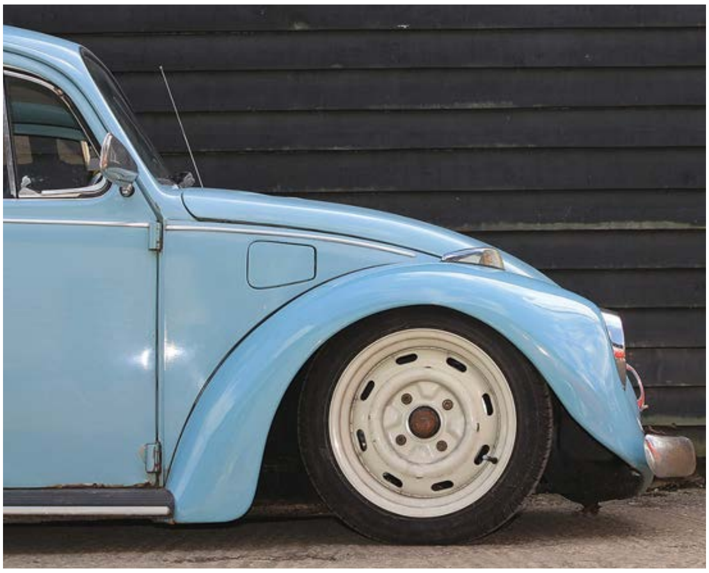
21 The final job is to connect up the wiring. The kit is supplied with a relay that allows the pressure switch on the tank to control the compressor. A live feed is run to the pressure switch, then taken from the switch to the relay and to earth. Meanwhile, the feed to the compressor is also fed through the relay. To allow the whole system to be switched off, a small rocker switch was fitted in the kick panel under the rear seat, where it can be easily reached from the front of the car



22 Last but not least, the switch and gauge panel was fixed into the glove box. Then the system was fired up. The compressor should fill the tank quickly and then cut off. If it doesn't, check the wiring on the relay to make sure the correct connections have been made. If there is no evidence of leaks anywhere in the system, flick the toggle switch up and the front of your car should magically rise off the ground



23 And here is the result – complete control of your front suspension height, a cool look and enough clearance to get over most obstacles you might encounter on a normal road, or to get your car up a slope into a driveway, for example. Note that this particular car has been fitted with a two-inch narrowed beam to provide a little bit more wheel clearance with the wings, but spend some time moving the car through its full range of suspension and steering travel to ensure nothing binds or catches. Now you're ready to style it out on the street



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Shelly shocked

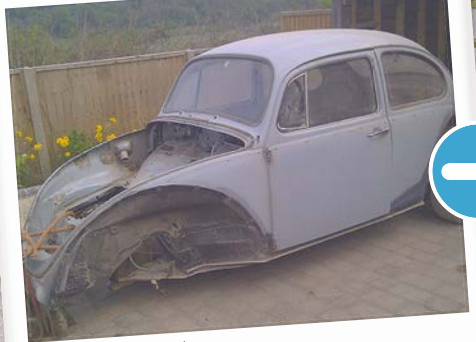
There's no better deadline for a project than a wedding

Words Clive Evans **Photos** Mike Prior

This is my '68 1300 Beetle that we know as 'Shelly'. I'd wanted a Beetle since as far back as I can remember, my interest in them beginning when I attended the local BVF show in Malvern when I was eight-years old with my parents. Nearly two decades later (in 2010) I bought my first one off eBay, after briefly looking around online for something cheap with potential, an MoT and as old as I could get. Shelly has had 13 owners and was saved from the scrapyard by the previous owner. She had an MoT, a 1641cc engine and I haggled the seller down to £1,500. I was then able to drive all the way back from Crewe with my mate in convoy with no issues.

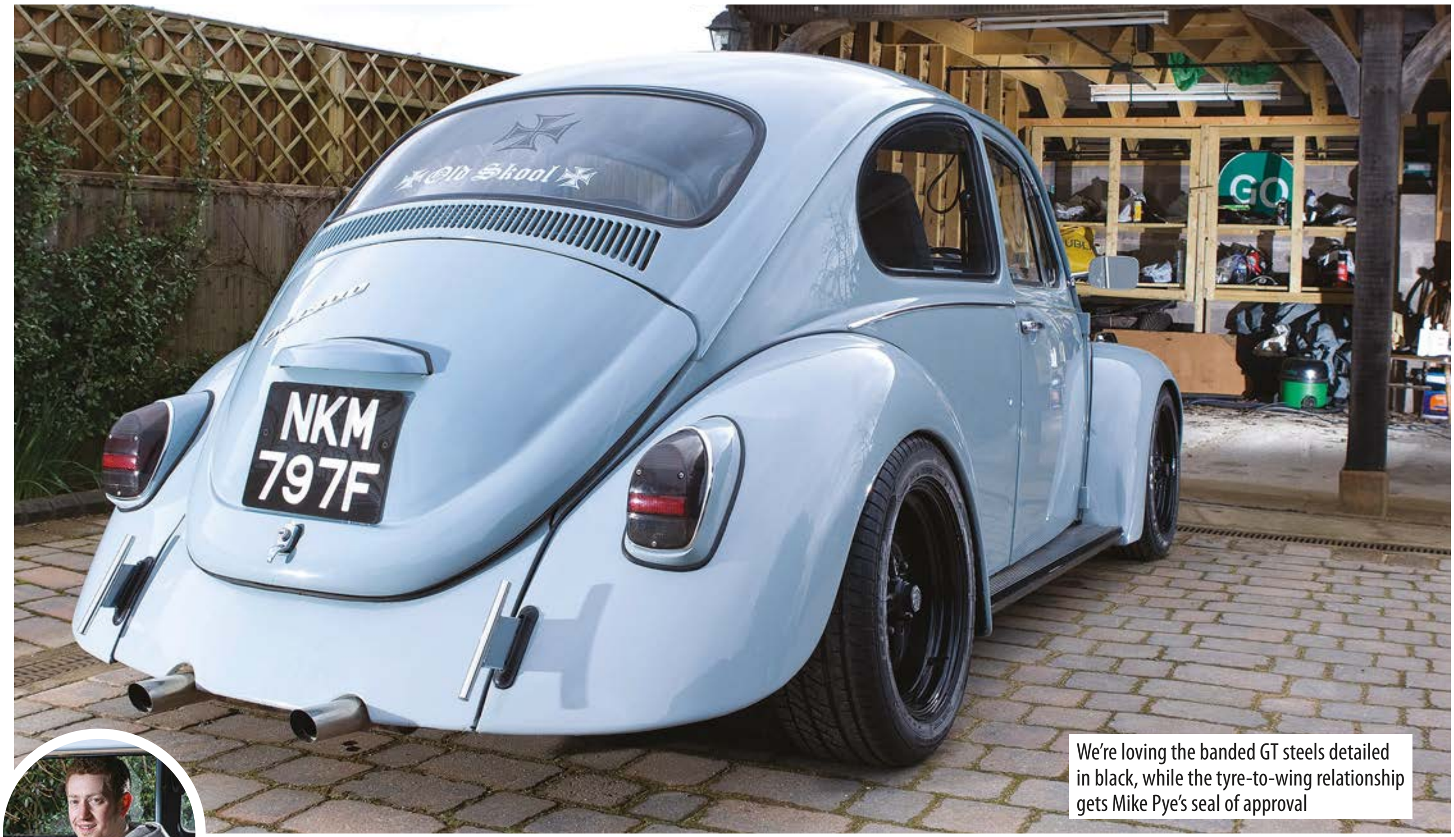
I ran her around as she was for a few months before taking the irreversible decision to take her off the road for some TLC. I'm a quality engineer by trade and have worked mainly in the automotive industry, so I had some experience and knowledge, I just hadn't applied it to an actual car before…

RESTORATION TIMELINE

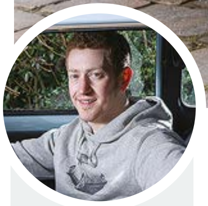


1. NOVEMBER 2010
The full strip down of the bodyshell gets under way

1968 1300 Beetle



We're loving the banded GT steels detailed in black, while the tyre-to-wing relationship gets Mike Pye's seal of approval



BUILDER INFO

NAME: Clive Evans

AGE: 30

LOCATION: Herefordshire

OCCUPATION: Quality engineer

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE? The doors, fitting all the seals and trim

FAVOURITE PART: The electric seat and the banded steels

WHAT'S NEXT? A bigger engine!

Until buying this car, I could only do basic arc welding, but this soon changed after I noticed the front end had accident damage and rot, the rear valance and rear wings were shot and various other bits needed attention, too. So I bought a second hand MIG welder and started buying panels from VW Heritage.

Although this sounds bad, I was quite lucky in some respects. Someone at some point in the not-too-distant past had replaced the heater channels and made a reasonable attempt at replacing the inner rear arches. If I were to do it again, I'd start off by spending more money on a better car, only replace panels with major damage and numerous other things, but I got bored of scratching around with rusty holes and filler and decided to cut the entire front end off at the a-posts.

I replaced the front wings, front clip, front quarters, lower a-posts, rear valance, bumper mounts, rear wings and ended up doing a floorpan swap, too. I was told that the engine (not original) had been refurbished and, as it was running pretty well, decided to leave it until I could afford to replace it completely. I got it into the workshop and cleaned it up and replaced all gaskets and seals, and added a touch of fresh paintwork to boot. I probably went about most of the jobs in the wrong way, but I feel like I learned an awful lot in the process. I did the restoration in my spare time whilst working away and sometimes lost the will to carry on, but was spurred on in early 2013 when my friend asked if he could use my incomplete Beetle as his wedding car in August that year.

TOP RESTO TIP

Do a full dry build before paint (my mistake) to avoid any future issues, and only replace panels / sections that are completely shot

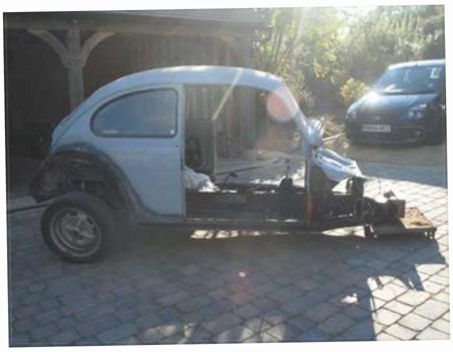
That was the motivation I needed. At that stage – the end of 2012 – the car was barely more than a painted 'shell. The paintwork was the one thing I thought I'd leave to the professionals as I didn't have the spare time and space to learn spraying, plus I could potentially spend a lot of money and time and still create an orange peel monster.

Over the couple of years since owning the car, I'd been buying and searching for bits, so at least I had the majority of the car ready, I just had to build it.

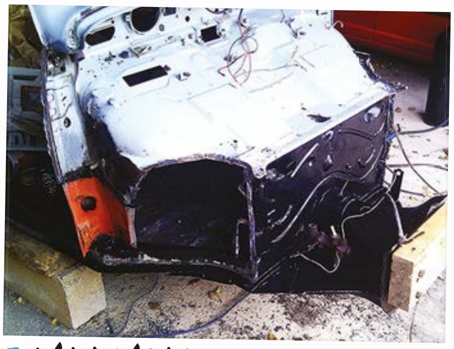
Hot seats

I sourced some Porsche 944 front seats through eBay and partnered them with the original rear bench and some new door cards, then sent them off for a re-trim in Morgan leather at my local upholsterer, Vantasia in Powick, Worcestershire. Diane did a great job and they were ready by mid-summer.

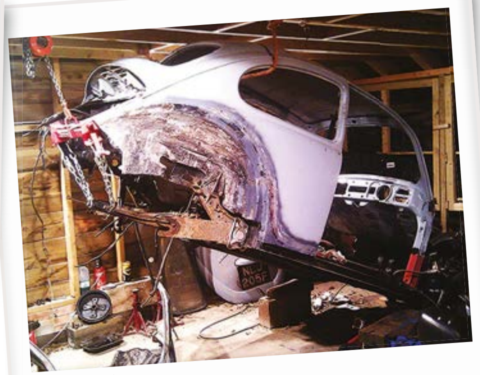
To cut a very long story short, the car passed its MoT at local specialist,



2. JANUARY 2011
Front end cut off for repairs. No turning back now...



3. JANUARY 2011
New lower a-post panel in place, but there's still a long way to go



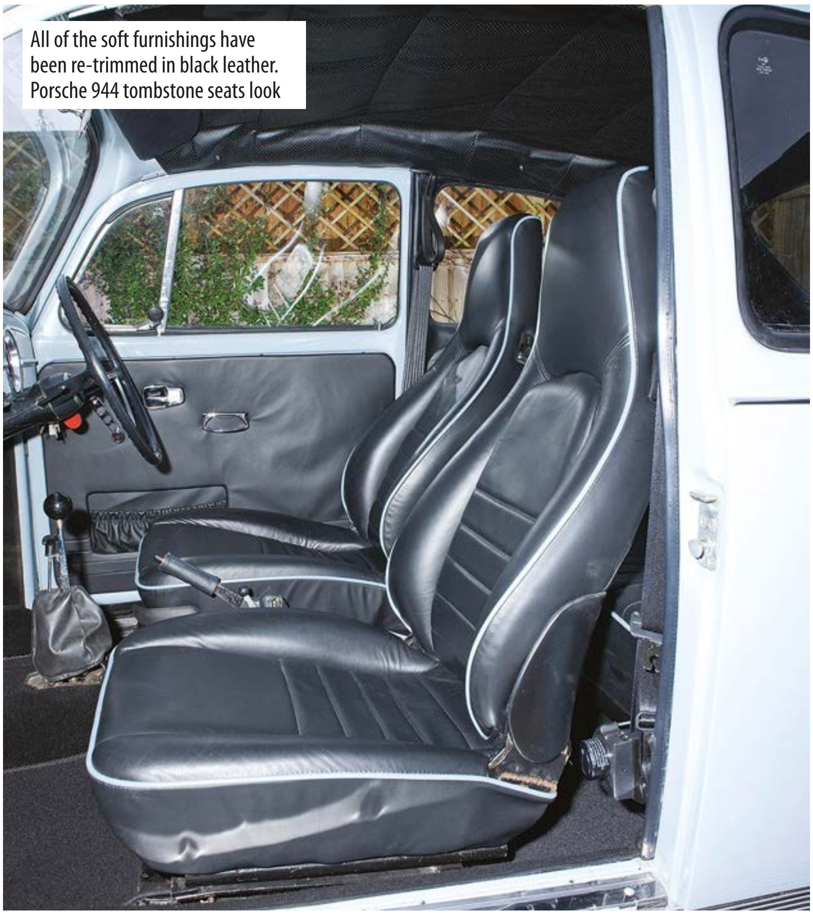
4. MAY 2011
Hang 'em high! Rear end repairs were equally comprehensive

TECH INFO

YEAR: 1968
ENGINE: 1641cc
GEARBOX: Stock 4-speed
SUSPENSION: Full-width balljoint beam with adjusters and two-spline drop on the rear
BRAKES: Stock VW 4-bolt drums
WHEELS AND TYRES: VW GT steels, banded one inch front and two on the back; Fulda 155/65 R15 front, Cooper 205/50 R15 rear

OUR OPINION

Having owned a Marina Blue 1200 for my first car, I have a soft spot for pale blue '70's Beetles so am a bit biased here. Other than the banded steels – which look great – and the lack of bumpers, the exterior of this car could almost pass for stock. Inside is another matter, and Clive's put a lot of effort into creating his perfect interior. Good effort!
– James

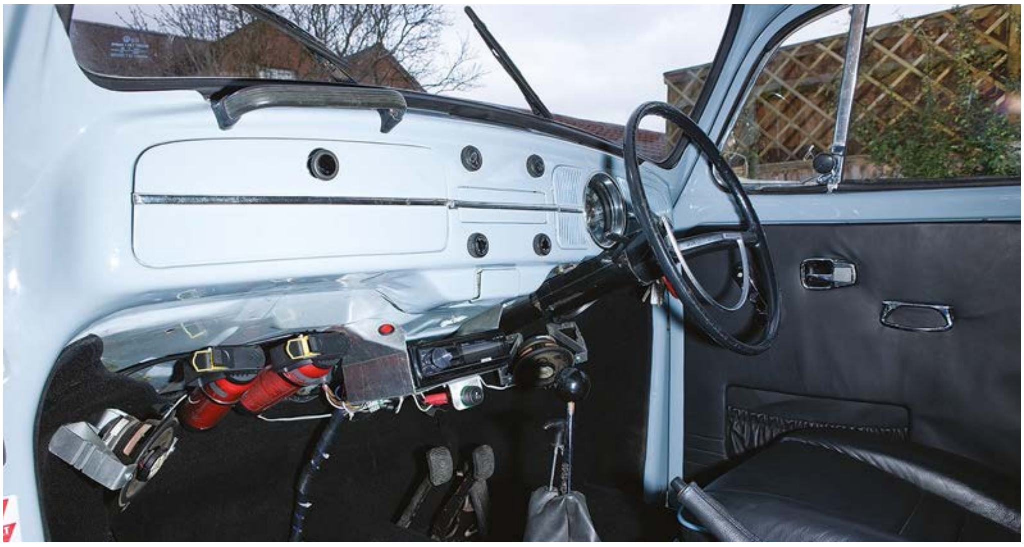

All of the soft furnishings have been re-trimmed in black leather. Porsche 944 tombstone seats look

Volkswrecks in Tewkesbury, on the Friday afternoon before the wedding weekend. Then, with a little help from a couple of mates working until 3am on the Saturday morning, cleaning and getting the car 'wedding-ready', she successfully carried both bride and groom from the church to the wedding reception venue nearby, thankfully with no issues, even though I'd had to re-weld the exhaust manifold onto the flange and repair the worn gear linkage bush that had resulted in the loss of two gears during the wedding rehearsal.

> “I got bored of scratching around with rusty holes and cut the entire front end off”

I couldn't watch as they drove down the rough worn church pathway and through a field in my freshly finished car (it's lowered on an adjustable front beam and dropped two splines at the rear), but I'd succeeded. I couldn't believe it.

I ran her for a couple of months after the wedding and changed a few bits and

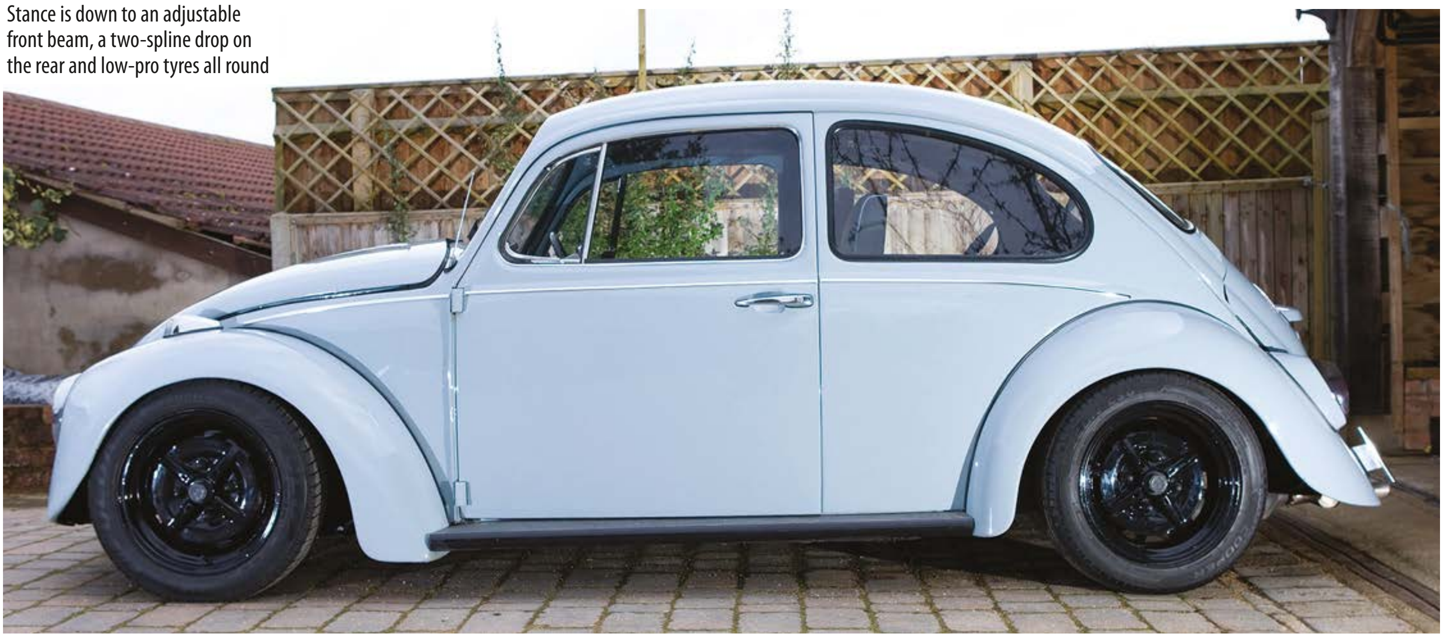

< Blanking plate in the dash and a modern head unit under it with home built speaker mounts

5. OCTOBER 2011
Welding complete, front beam and gearbox fitted to make rolling 'shell

6. OCTOBER 2011
The view from the back with new rear wings and valance fitted

7. NOVEMBER 2012
Back from paint, ready for the challenge of re-fitting everything

Stance is down to an adjustable front beam, a two-spline drop on the rear and low-pro tyres all round



> “I probably went about it in the wrong way, but I learnt an awful lot in the process”

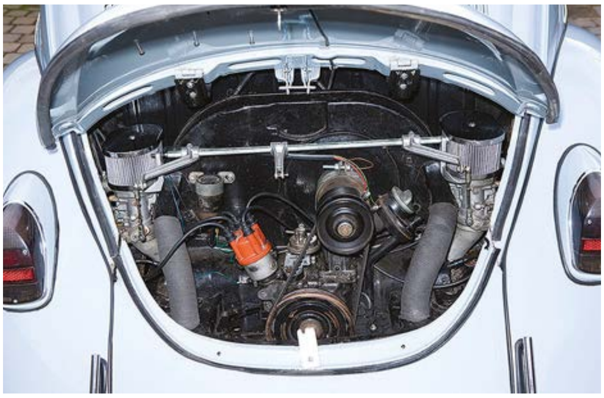
bobs until she broke down on the way to my girlfriend’s house, with what turned out to be clogged fuel lines. Since then, I’ve installed some Dell’Orto carbs, a new exhaust and have changed the front tyres for smaller ones due to the old ones rubbing. She’s also had a front disc brake conversion, new brake lines and master cylinder, been re-carpeted throughout, new bonnet, windows, all seals, new wiring loom, battery, electric fuel pump, a decent stereo and sub combo, and even has a working electric driver’s seat.

I sourced another pair of original GT wheels and had them shot blasted and powder coated after a cheeky one-inch band on the front and two on the rear.

I intend taking her to shows this year and for the perceivable future. I’m going to build a replacement engine and am hoping to do an 1835. I also intend on getting a stainless roof rack and an electric passenger seat to keep the Mrs. happy.

I’m sure she will be a work in progress but for now she’s legal and she moves. ■

^ Rear bench is stock, but has been re-covered to match the replacement Porsche front seats. Big sounds emanate from behind the rear seat



^ 1641cc engine has been treated to some Dell’Orto carbs and an 009 dizzy, but a bigger unit is on the cards

< Ammo box tool kit gets to sit on its own blanket, rather than scratch the fuel tank. A card bonnet liner would help

8. JANUARY 2013
Clive said installing a headliner is not a job for the faint hearted

9. JUNE 2013
The freshened-up engine on a very homemade engine stand

10. AUGUST 2013
Made it to the church on time, and no issues on the day either!

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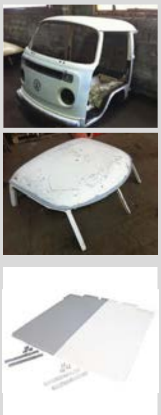

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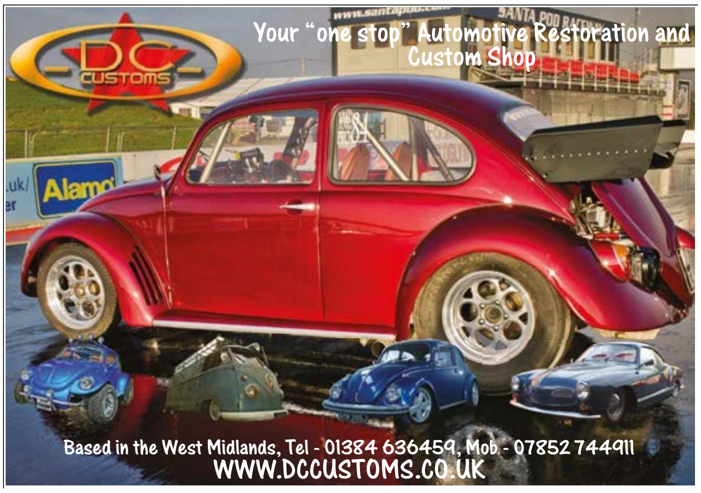

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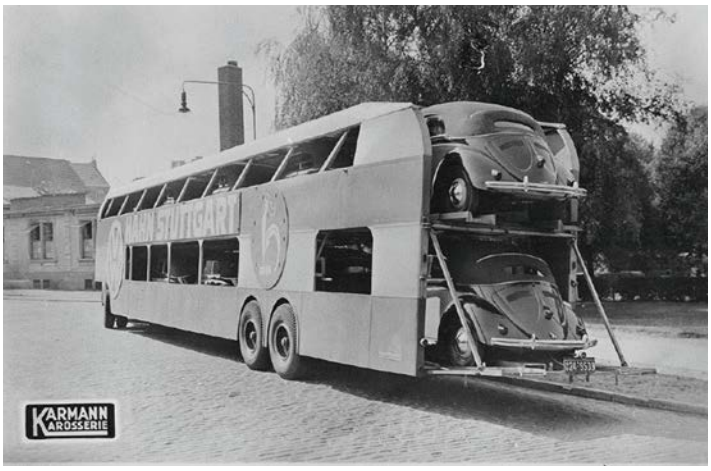

Now that's what we call a car transporter. They were expensive when new, but today nine Split Window Cabriolets like this would buy you a very nice house indeed

I

As even Volkswagen itself often admitted, the Beetle wasn't exactly the most attractive of machines. Functional, and with a certain curvaceous charm, perhaps. But as a cheap people's car, being beautiful wasn't that high up on its criteria. At least not initially.

However, during the late 1940s and 1950s, as it recovered from the war, VW looked to expand and sell more. That meant increasing its range and, for that, the car maker turned to fellow German firm, Karmann.

Karmann originated in 1874 as the Klases coachbuilding company. Bought by Wilhelm Karmann in 1901, it was re-named and gradually shifted from horse-drawn carriages into car body construction. It especially focussed on convertibles, a somewhat more complex discipline than mere saloons. After World War II, Karmann found itself in a similar situation to VW – run by the British army from what remained of its bombed-out factory in Osnabrück. The two struggling companies were ideal for each other, especially as VW had ambitious plans to resurrect the pre-war Cabriolet Beetle. It was precisely the sort of thing Karmann was great at.

> “Karmann initially struggled with its chop-job Beetle”

Nevertheless, Karmann didn't have it all its own way. It was awarded the contract to build four-seater Beetle convertibles, with production starting in 1949. However, the deal for the two-seater, *al fresco* versions went to its rival, Hebmüller. This was a far more stylish creation, based on a one-off convertible coupé built during British army days for Colonel Charles Radclyffe. However, Hebmüller's construction had only just began when fire hit its factory in July 1949. It was uninsured and went bankrupt the following year. A no doubt jubilant Karmann was now the only player on the field, and even took 14 unfinished Hebmüllers to finish them off.

Despite its considerable experience, Karmann initially struggled with its chop-job Beetle. Early prototypes flexed in the middle, with windscreens cracking after just a few miles, until the underbody strengthening was perfected. Just 364 examples were built during 1949, but 2,679 were managed the following year. Production peaked at almost 20,000 in 1979.

All this placed Karmann as VW's favourite bedfellow for anything new and special based on the Beetle. So, in the early 1950s, when VW wanted a sleek and sexy coupé, it was to Karmann it trotted. Karmann, in turn, went to Italian firm Carrozzeria Ghia. Its designer, Luigi Segre, revamped some previous ideas for Studebaker and Chrysler and *voilà*, the sporty-looking Karmann Ghia was born. It debuted as a concept car at the 1953 Paris Motor Show and went into production in 1955. While the Beetle underpinnings meant performance never quite matched the svelte looks, it was, nevertheless, a very successful creation. And a very good looking one, too. Karmann's predilection for decapitating things resulted in a convertible joining the line up in 1957.

Karmann and Ghia tried to prove that lightning could strike twice in 1961, with the Type 34 coupé offshoot of VW's Type 3, but the so-called 'Razor Edge' design, penned by Ghia's Sergio Sartorelli, was less popular. Not even cutting the roof off could save it, with just 17 convertibles constructed.

The comparative failure of the Type 34 prompted VW to team up with old buddy, Porsche, to magic up the 914 as a budget sports car replacement that both companies could sell. While Porsche built the six-cylinder cars, Karmann was entrusted with the less potent four-cylinder models, utilising engines from the 411. The same year (1969), VW also tried to cash in on the Beetle-based Beach Buggy craze by coming up with its own. Actually, the glass fibre bodies were built elsewhere, but it was to Karmann that the job of mating everything together was entrusted. The finished product was dubbed the Karmann GF Buggy.

From 1974, Karmann also put together coachbuilt motorhomes, using the Bay Window Bus as a basis, graduating to subsequent Transporter generations as VW launched them. Today, these 'Gipsies' have something of a cult following.

After its air-cooled exploits, Karmann continued to be VW's special friend, responsible for Golf convertibles, the Scirocco and the Corrado, as well as vehicles for other manufacturers, including Porsche. But it found itself a victim of the economic downturn in 2009 and went bankrupt. The Osnabrück site was snapped up by VW. Well, after all these years, it couldn't possibly trust anyone else make its convertibles, could it? ■

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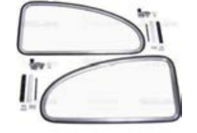
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